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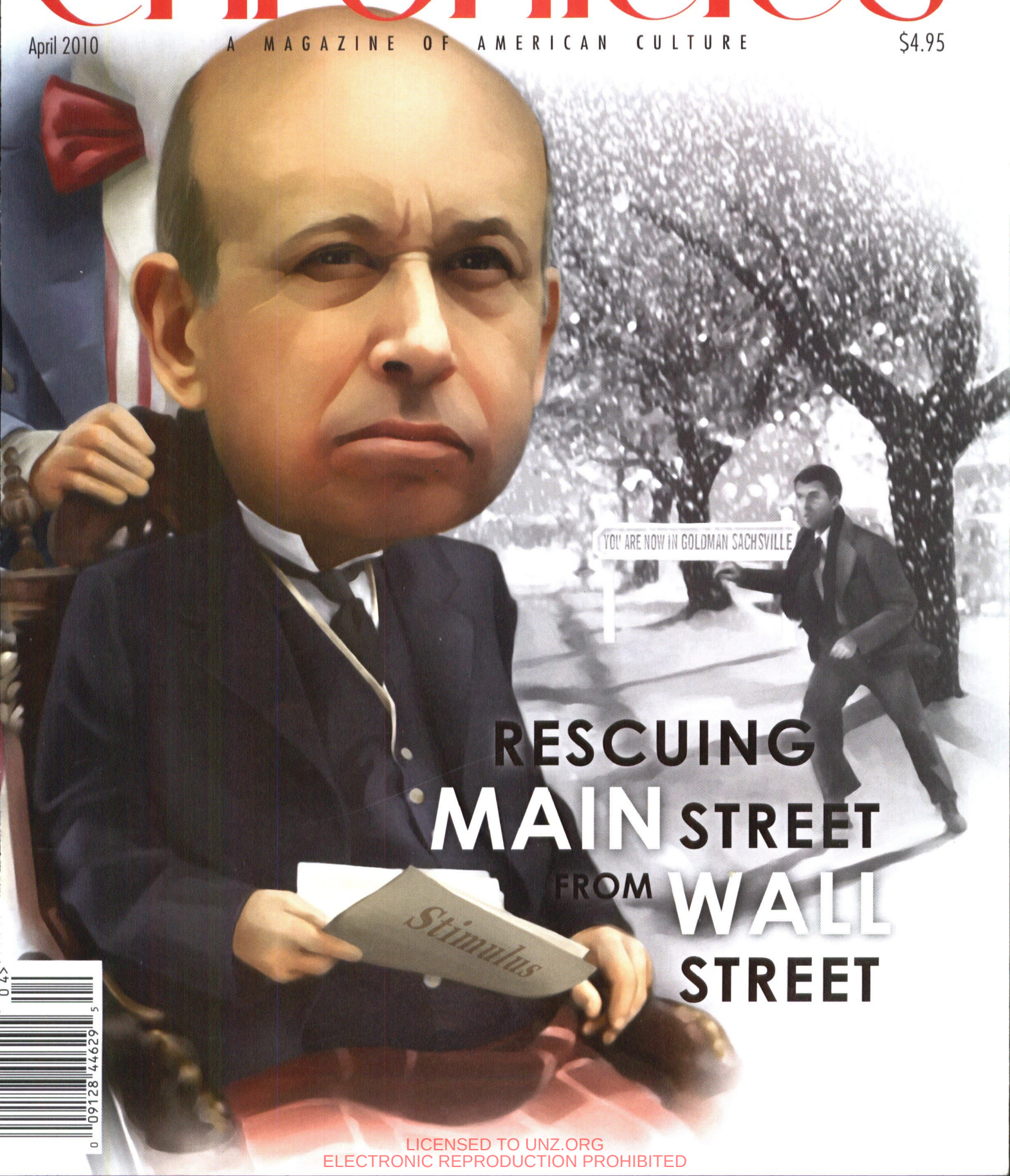

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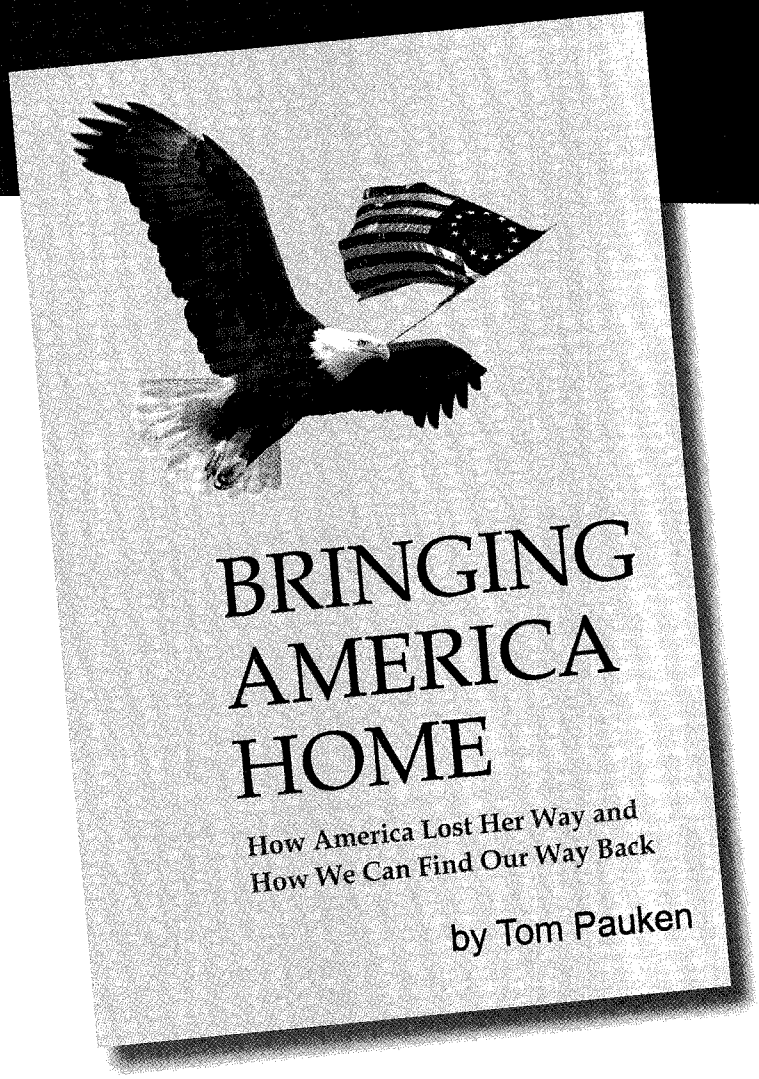

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Tom Pauken, a U.S. military intelligence officer in Vietnam, served on President Ronald Reagan's White House staff. As director of the Action agency, he founded the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program and implemented Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No to Drugs" campaign.

A native Texan, small-business owner, and former state chairman of the Texas Republican Party, Tom Pauken is the author of *The Thirty Years War: The Politics of the Sixties Generation*.

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Killer Language

Thanks to F.W. Brownlow for an informative article in the February issue ("Of Genes, Vowels, and Violence," *Correspondence*), which was a rebuttal to a previous article by Philip Jenkins. It has become increasingly obvious that the traditional story of the evolution of the English language—that a small, all-male military caste of Anglo-Saxons quickly imposed their language on the mass of indigenous Britons—is not true. But what is the real story? Brownlow states that philologists are baffled by the problem: "the best explanation they can come up with is that English . . . is a 'killer' language, which . . . drives out other languages."

The "killer language" theory doesn't make sense. It hasn't happened anywhere else. There has to be much more to the story. In *The Secret History of the English Language* M.J. Harper posits that some form of English was spoken in the British Isles before the arrival of the Celts and Anglo-Saxons. He says we have only the written record and cannot know what the great mass of illiterate people spoke. DNA evidence supports his general theory. Studies now show that the conquering Celts, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, and Norman French had only a minute genetic impact. A population of over 90-percent "common people" would not suddenly start speaking the language of a small number of conquerors.

I would love to hear Dr. Brownlow's comments on M.J. Harper's theory.

—Paul F. Kennedy
Greensburg, PA

Dr. Brownlow Replies:

I'm glad that Paul Kennedy enjoyed my piece, but I'm afraid the only comment I can make about M.J. Harper's book is that its ideas—for instance, that English has always been spoken in Britain, and that it is the parent language of French—are nonsense. Meanwhile, the "traditional story" of English remains true: in the fourth through sixth centuries Germanic warrior in-comers displaced the ruling group, and their language displaced the P-Celtic then spoken in southern and eastern Britain. Why this happened, we don't know—but then we don't know why, if the newcomers were a minority, the P- and Q-Celtic languages displaced their predecessor languages, either. Nor do we know why English was not displaced in its turn by Norman-French. All that calling English a killer language means, really, is that it displaces other languages, but it has not itself been displaced. That, so far, seems to be a fact.

On the Redesign

The February issue arrived yesterday. I love the redesign. The magazine is more inviting and readable. Congratulations!

—Ronald E. Burr
Vienna, VA

I like the new *Chronicles* format. It took a bit of getting used to at first, but it is clearer and less cluttered.

—Steve Berg
DeKalb, IL

My kudos to all who contributed to a long-overdue format "face-lift," especially from one whose acuity (vision only, of course) leaves much to be desired!

—P.J. Corr
Wesley Chapel, FL

I liked the old appearance of *Chronicles*, but I believe I like the new layout even better!

—Mark Slater
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Frankfurt School Tories

by Matthew A. Roberts

IT IS A STRANGE WORLD in which allegedly conservative politicians will go to great lengths to demonstrate their politically correct *bona fides*. For years, we have witnessed this tendency within the Republican Party. A recent example is the new Republican Party website (*www.gop.com*), which one might confuse for the websites of the NAACP or La Raza. It features a "Republican heroes" theme, filled with photos and bios of Republican luminaries, household names like José Celso Barbosa and Pinckney Pinchback. There is also a "Republican faces" page, which shows photos of various demographics one might have expected to vote (and who, the data confirm, did vote) for Barack Obama in the last election.

Credit must be given, however, to the United Kingdom's Conservative Party for upping the ante. Not only do Tories want to present a false image, but they have decided to take it a step further and actually purge—drum roll—Englishmen from the party. That's right. The *Daily Mail* (February 19) has brought to light a confidential party memo in which David Cameron outlines a new plan for the party, a six-page document that "proposes the use of subterfuge to end the white, male and middle-class image of the Conservative Party." The plan is to wrest from localities the power to select their own candidates so that Cameron and his inner circle can choose more acceptable ones for them. And, of course, all of this should be done in secret.

The document recommends the use of "stealth" and keeping "quiet" to ensure more women, ethnic, and homosexual candidates within the party: "Like a conjuror, we'll get more applause if the audience cannot see exactly how the trick is performed." It should appear natural, since "[t]he more that the profusion of women, black, Asian or gay candidates appears to be the result of spontaneous open-mindedness on the part of grassroot activists the greater will be the accolades."

The real threat to Cameron's machinations is the possible backlash from white males, the backbone of the party, which is why the document suggests that "the handling of white males should be done with sensitivity." In other words, don't let white males participate in the party their ancestors built, but be dishonestly polite to keep them as water-carriers and voters.

It seems that such an exercise in unpatriotic deception would be doomed from the start. In fact, even before the leaking of this memo, many English conservatives have flocked to other parties, such as the British National Party or the U.K. Independence Party. But current Tory leadership has a backup plan: Intimidate people into staying in the party. Tory activists have started a website entitled *Nothing British*, which smears discontented right-wingers in the United Kingdom as being "anti-British." Likewise, David Cameron is a signatory to the Unite Against Fascism campaign, which has the "aim of alerting British society to the rising threat of the extreme right." For "extreme right," read "anyone who sees through the conjurer's tricks." And the number of disillusioned has been growing for some time.

English writer Derek Turner, editor of *The Quarterly Review* and contributor to *Chronicles*, wrote in a recent e-mail exchange: "David Cameron has ignored 'the national question' for so long that many instinctive Tories are probably going to vote UKIP or BNP anyway." The news of this cynical memo, he notes, "will almost certainly turn some Conservative voters toward the BNP, which could have the effect of making the Tories do much less well than expected in some marginal seats." Looking to the future, Turner believes that "Cameron is playing a dangerous game—it is no longer true that disgruntled Conservatives have nowhere else to go."

Like John McCain's brilliant "Hispanic vote" strategy in the last U.S. presidential election, Cameron's diversity drive may well push his party into a banal insignificance. ◆

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Jobs Recall

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION (and former GOP congressman) Ray LaHood unleashed a storm of controversy when he told a House committee looking into sudden-acceleration accidents involving Toyotas that "if anybody owns one of these vehicles, stop driving it, take it to a Toyota dealer . . . " The reaction of the neocon establishment was predictable: John Miller at *National Review Online*, who had urged readers in 2006 to "Buy American, Buy Toyota," suggested that the federal government, with its ownership stake in GM, wanted Toyota to "drop dead," and Michael Barone, writing in the *Washington Examiner*, also cited the stake of the government and the UAW in GM and Chrysler and argued that LaHood's comments were a prime example of "crony capitalism." Many other neocons rallied around Toyota, depicting the Japanese titan as a helpless victim of a malevolent government and a hostile media, a sentiment that was quite welcome in Tokyo, according to a February 18 *Wall Street Journal* article, "Politicians Rally to Toyota's Side."

As with other notions peddled by neocons, the reality was somewhat different. Toyota's safety problems are quite real, as shown by the recall of 7.7 million vehicles to fix the accelerator pedals and floor mats Toyota blames for accidents involving sudden acceleration, the recall of 440,000 Priuses for brake issues, and the contemplated recall of Corollas for steering problems. Toyota's sudden-acceleration problem was first reported to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) not by the UAW but by State Farm, which was trying to protect its own assets, not aid the U.S. auto industry. And far from harassing Toyota, American politicians have generally been quite accommodating. A February 12 Associated Press article noted that Toyota was the only car company employing former NHTSA employees to deal with the agency and detailed how Toyota's NHTSA ties had enabled the company to shut down four earlier investigations involving sudden-acceleration accidents. The *Wall Street Journal* article noted that Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, "has proceeded more cautiously" than former chairman John McCain did in investigating the safety problems of American car manufacturers, perhaps because Rockefeller helped lure Toyota to West Virginia and "has a page on his Web site devoted to Toyota's role in the state." The governors of five states have even taken a jab at the American auto industry, telling Congress in a letter that Toyota has "responded to its safety problems in a more 'emphatic manner' than any other car company under scrutiny by the Department of Transportation." And LaHood soon backed off his comments and began burbling about what a "good corporate citizen" Toyota is.

If anything, the treatment Toyota has received in the American media has been even more positive than its treatment from American politicians. The incompetence of Detroit has long been part of the media's larger anti-American narrative, and this is likely the first time most Americans have heard of recalls by Japanese manufacturers, though there have been others before this. Indeed, Honda recently added 437,000 cars to a recall to fix defective air bags installed by a Japanese supplier. Perhaps no publication has been as consistently supportive of Toyota as *Consumer Reports*, whose parent organization was deemed subversive by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The failure of *Consumer Reports* to detect the problems leading to Toyota's massive recalls prompted automotive blogger Peter De Lorenzo to suggest that the magazine stop writing about cars for a while: "Weren't you the guys that basically forged your influence over the domestic automobile industry by holding up Toyota as an example of everything good and righteous and great about quality automobiles and regularly took great pleasure in reminding everyone of that fact—especially the Detroit automakers—whom you relentlessly took pot shots at and trashed with glee every chance you got? Yeah, we thought so. Maybe you ought to take a break from the car business for a while—after all, if you can't write anything good about Toyota, what are you guys going to write about?"

Toyota's investment in the United States, so lauded by its supporters in politics and the media, is the direct result of policies Toyota opposed, and there is little reason to suppose such investment would last much longer than the American auto industry Toyota has long sought to supplant. Toyota and other Japanese car companies began building plants here as a hedge against American protectionism, particularly the import quotas imposed during the Reagan administration. Although those plants have created some jobs, they were part of a process that destroyed many more: As the *Wall Street Journal* conceded, in a piece generally favorable to foreign automakers, "for every job created by the transplant producers, Detroit shed 6.1 jobs in the U.S. . . . " Foreign automakers repatriate the profits they make here, and the same piece admitted that "strategic decisions are taken and much of the value-added engineering and design is done back home." In a different article from the summer of 2007, the *Journal* quoted an unnamed Toyota executive as saying, "It's much, much more profitable to produce cars in Japan and ship them all to the U.S. right now, if it wasn't for the political problems that might cause." One of the reasons for this was set forth in a memo by U.S. Toyota executive Seiichi Sudo, published by the *Detroit Free Press* in 2007. Sudo advocated that Toyota no longer "tie ourselves so closely to the U.S. auto industry" in setting wages for its American work-

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ers, which Sudo wanted to cut by up to 50 percent. He also noted that "Compared with Japan and France, the U.S. auto industry pays 50% higher wages and over five times more than Mexico's auto manufacturers." Thus, the total triumph of the Japanese automakers over their American rivals would likely mean diminished wages and lost jobs not only for the Americans employed by GM, Ford, and Chrysler, but for the Americans employed by Toyota, Honda, and Nissan. Perhaps Secretary LaHood should have stood by his initial comments.

—Tom Piatak

Battle of the Narrative

When a manufacturing company is confronted with the reality of a huge drop in product sales, the initial reaction on the part of the managers is to blame the marketing department and to demand that it come up with a new and more effective advertising campaign. After all, the notion that their air-conditioning units are not actually working or that trying to sell them to Eskimos was a lousy idea would be a direct and very costly challenge to the power of the CEO and the management team and the business strategy they have been pursuing, and could force the company either to start investing in a new product or to go bankrupt.

A much less expansive plan, and one that does not raise questions about the ability of the company to survive under its current leadership and guiding business principles, would be to hire a few p.r. wizards who could help polish the company's image and perhaps even redefine its "brand name." How about "A/C for Eskimos: A Preemptive Strike Against Global Warming"?

Similarly, it is not surprising that when political reality bites, like when one loses a presidential race, the tendency on the part of the loser is to blame his media strategist for his defeat and dismiss the suggestion that he was an awful candidate with a useless message. And judging by the propensity of the current Israeli government to embrace global public relations as a principal diplomatic tool, the Jewish state's leaders have concluded that their nation's increasing international isolation has nothing to do with policies—like continuing to build Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and killing many civilians during the recent war against Hamas in Gaza—and that a 24/7 bombardment of news bites, television commercials, podcasts, and YouTube spots would transform Israel into a popular global player.

The obsessive preoccupation of Israeli policymakers and pundits with the need to launch an effective p.r. campaign to win the hearts and minds of the residents of the global village recalls the way Bush-administration officials and their neoconservative ideologues insisted that the United States was not losing on the Iraqi battlefields. That America was becoming so unpopular in the Muslim world and elsewhere had nothing to do with the allegedly successful U.S. policies in the Middle East; they reflected the failure of Washington's "media strategy." Victory comes only to those who are able to construct the "narrative" by producing captivating messages and deploying winning messengers to share them.

So when Israeli officials and pundits convened for the annual Herzliya Conference, a prestigious gathering of strategic thinkers from around the world, "Winning the Battle of the Narrative: Strategic Communication for Israel" was the title of one of the public sessions. In fact, the Israeli government, including a newly formed "Information and Diaspora Affairs Ministry," has been working with leading American and European p.r. companies, lobbying organizations, and various NGOs to combat what has been described as "The 'Soft Warfare' against Israel" (another session at the Herzliya Conference).

Indeed, according to a recent report, "The Delegitimization Challenge," issued by the Reut Institute, an Israeli think tank, the main global threat facing Israel today is not Iranian military nuclear capability or Palestinian terrorism but the international campaign in the West, including on American campuses, aimed at boycotting Israel through divestment and sanctions. The authors of the report compared this campaign against Israel with the one conducted against the apartheid regime of South Africa, which helped mobilize international support from Western publics and governments for the dramatic political changes in that country. And they warned that Israel is now facing a similar threat of international "delegitimization" that could lead eventually to the erosion of support for the Jewish state among Americans and Europeans.

One way of trying to improve the Israeli image abroad was the launching of a "Brand Israel" initiative a few years ago, under which major American p.r. and advertising companies have been promoting Israel as a scientific, cultural, and tourism center, while downplaying political and religious issues, including the conflict with the Palestinians. According to a March 16, 2008, report in the *Jerusalem Post*, the Brand Israel campaign identified cities like Toronto, Tokyo, London, Boston, and New York as locations for its initial programs, which could include "organizing film festivals, or food and wine festivals featuring Israel-made products."

And now the Israeli government has begun a campaign to turn every Israeli into a traveling p.r. officer, with the Information and Diaspora Affairs Ministry issuing pamphlets to passengers on Israeli airlines, coaching them on how to counter the alleged anti-Israeli campaign across the globe: "Are you fed up with the way we are portrayed around the world? You can change the picture."

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While some Israelis are convinced that their country is a victim of a campaign of "delegitimization" masterminded by anti-Israel activists, this effort does not go beyond a small circle of left-wing and Islamic groups who have close to zero impact on the public opinion and governments of Europe and North America. In fact, the support for Israel in Washington and European capitals remains rock solid. The Israeli p.r. campaign stems from "a genuine fear that Israel is misrepresented, sometimes in very vicious ways," Prof. Shlomo Avineri from Hebrew University in Jerusalem told the *New York Times*. "On this level it is understandable," he said. "But I think it is puerile. Some of the information is ridiculous, and behind it I find a Bolshevik mentality—to make every citizen an unpaid civil servant for the policy of the government. There is never any intimation that some of our problems have to do with actual policies."

—Leon Hadar

Anatomy of a Murder

The November murder of a missionary Orthodox priest in Moscow highlighted the threats to Russia's stability from extremist groups, including Muslim terrorists and the far right. The priest, Daniil Sysoyev, and his aide, Vladimir Strelbitsky, were shot down in a church in Moscow's Southern Administrative Okrug on November 19. The gunman, whom some sources described as North Caucasian in appearance, entered the church and asked, "Who here is Sysoyev?" before opening fire. Other sources report that the killer likely called the church first by cellphone to verify Sysoyev's presence before entering to commit the murder.

Sysoyev, an ethnic Tatar and the author of a number of books (including *The Orthodox Answer to Islam*), had directed his missionary work primarily at Muslims and had taken part in a long-standing religious debate with the country's Muslim intelligentsia. He had also been the target of a lawsuit by Nafigulla Ashirov of the Council of Muftis of Russia. Ashirov had claimed that one of the priest's missionary brochures for Muslims violated "anti-extremist" legislation; similar complaints from Muslim groups were made in 2008. Meanwhile, Russian nationalists claimed that Ashirov's complaint amounted to a death sentence for Sysoyev.

Sysoyev had, in fact, been the target of a number of death threats, the latest coming in calls to his church from a self-proclaimed "defender of Islam." Sysoyev had reported such threats to the authorities on a number of occasions. The killing took place even as the Russian North Caucasus, which includes the Muslim republics Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan, continued to be the scene of violence. In recent months, an insurgency against the authorities led by Muslim militants has intensified, with attacks on state officials and law-enforcement/security personnel occurring daily. Recently, the attacks have been spearheaded by a rash of suicide bombings on military personnel and police officers.

But there are other versions of the murder being considered. Some investigators suspect far-right Russian nationalists called *rodnovery*, who have been held responsible for an explosion at a Moscow church, of being behind the killings. *Rod* is the root of many Russian words denoting lineage, including *rodina* ("motherland"), and *vera* means "faith." The *rodnovery* are part of a far-right subculture that includes neopagans, many of whom preach a nationalist faith that incorporates elements of paganism, supposedly emulating the pre-Christian Slavs, as well as elements drawn from Orthodox Christianity. In the 1990's, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the search for an "authentic" source for a postcommunist identity was the cause of much debate among Russian intellectuals. On the extreme end of the nationalist right the search for identity included neo-Nazi "Orthodox paganism," ersatz Slavic warriors in armor making sacrifices to ancient gods, and Russian skinheads eschewing political or racial-purity programs for "direct action." Such "action" has continued to this day, with murders of ethnic minorities and foreigners being a favored method of self-expression. In the Russian case, borrowing heavily from their European predecessors of the 20th century, the neopagan farce quickly, and predictably, turned to nihilism and deadly violence.

Particularly since Daniil Sysoyev was an ethnic Tatar, it is not difficult to imagine the *rodnovery*, who preach a pure faith of their own making as a defining element in Russianness, targeting a man who preached minority conversion to Orthodoxy (traditionally a means of joining the Russian nation) or attacking Orthodox churches. But this being postcommunist Russia, where the *kontrolny vystrel* (the "control shot," the *coup de grâce* in a contract murder) is the ultimate means of settling a political or business dispute, there is always the possibility that the killing had a material motive, one that was suggested by Moscow "political technologist" Stanislav Belkovsky. Belkovsky has claimed that the killing had a common (for Moscow) motivation—Sysoyev's church sits on valuable Moscow real estate that could be profitable for certain businesses, and the priest would not give it up.

—Wayne Allensworth

We Hardly Knew You

First, you realized that "Holden Caulfield" wasn't innocent anymore; then, that he was old; then, that he is dead. J.D. Salinger was 91 when he passed away recently in Cornish, New Hampshire, and that means not only that he had been disappeared and aged for a long time, but

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that he never was young even when we got to know him. Salinger was born in 1919—he was a grown man when World War II began, and the real story of his life has to do with D-Day, the Hürtgen Forest, and Bastogne. When he wrote "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" (1948) and "For Esmé—With Love and Squalor" (1950), he was writing, though not always obviously, about the psychic wound of brutality, innocence lost. The regression of *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) was so nicely turned that, 65 million copies later, there's not much point in attempting any evaluation of that text, because it is its own reality and even cult.

For my own part, I owe a debt to Salinger because of the way I ran into him. I heard my father and one of my uncles talking about *Nine Stories* and the novel, and the next thing I knew, I had copies of both. I was considerably younger than the "sixteen" of Holden Caulfield, but I learned some things from his creator: A writer gathers his stories, and he writes a novel. A writer is a man walking around now. And he thinks about some of the things you think about, or he teaches you to. I absorbed a lesson: I learned to value appeal and charm and vivacity in composition for their own sakes. And I learned, contradictorily, to value intuition and insight over reason: an error that implied its own correction. In other words, I was confirmed in my youthful impulses to overestimate my own emotions. To appreciate Salinger, I had to relish his style; but I also had to outgrow him, and I did. After *Franny and Zooey* appeared in 1961, I never read him again.

Neither did I forget him or various well-known passages. The ones I recall best are striking because the text is a text of texts. Holden has been in so many schools that he never finished *The Return of the Native*, yet he has something to say about it: "I'd rather call old Thomas Hardy up. I like that Eustacia Vye." Right, Holden; but later I learned about Eustacia myself, and I can attest that you would have liked her even better, Holden, if you had been named "Damon Wildeve." But such bravado follows a more challenging thought: "What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though." No, indeed it does not. But of course, one of the reasons that the author, not the narrator, of those lines secluded himself and quit publishing was the problem that many entertained such a sentiment about him.

War isn't the only brutality, of course—there is always the publishing industry and attendant publicity. And if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. So then Salinger was compared with Greta Garbo, though better comparisons might have been with Frances Farmer or Jean Seberg. Salinger was or became a "sensitive" like James Dean or Montgomery Clift. The images are of celebrity, not of authorship, and that's just the point. The logical move was to die, because to live on was to remain forever a target, but death would not come—until recently.

Because he was the object of a cult, Salinger was not altogether responsible for the damage he did. The cult of childhood innocence is theologically and even psychologically unsound; the cult of Eastern mysticism is theologically and culturally unsound; the 60's showed that much more is unsound; and later on, John Hinckley, Jr., and Mark David Chapman showed us the final logic of Holdenism—or is that Caulfieldism? But we can be grateful to the author of unforgettable sentences, such as "All morons hate it when you call them a moron." And "Sex is something I really don't understand too hot." And "I'm quite illiterate, but I read a lot." And "Don't ever tell anybody anything." And grateful as well for the citations of Charles Dickens, Isak Dinesen, Somerset Maugham, and Ring Lardner, as acknowledgments of the true sources of writing, in reading and the imagination—as distinct from neurotic affectation.

—James O. Tate

Obiter Dicta

Our poet this month is **William Baer**. A recent Guggenheim fellow, he is the author or editor of 15 books. His recent books include his fourth collection of poetry, *"Bocage" and Other Sonnets*, recipient of the X.J. Kennedy Poetry Prize; *Luís de Camões: Selected Sonnets*; and *Classic American Films: Conversations With the Screenwriters*. A former Fulbright fellow in Portugal, he currently serves as the director of the Richard Wilbur Poetry Series, the contributing editor at *Measure*, and the director of the Willis Barnstone Translation Prize.

The art on the cover and pages 12 and 15 is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and their children.

Thomas Fleming • Clyde Wilson • Paul Craig Roberts
Pat Buchanan • Justin Raimondo • William Murchison
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Cheating "Honest" Men

SOMETIMES I LIKE TO remind myself of what a nobody I am. It does not take much to trigger these fits of humility. A glance in the mirror or at the ever-expanding bulge in my vest is usually enough to call to mind at least two deadly sins that have tempted me all too often. If my self-administered physical examination fails to produce results, I can always check my telephone messages: "Tom, this is your high-school friend, Bob. There's a fat IPO I can get you in on. Call me back at Barnum and Associates." Needless to say, "Bob," who is young enough to be my grandson, does not even know what high school I attended. Now, a call from Bernie Madoff—that might have meant something, but I do not have enough money to interest a prince of Ponzi schemes or even a count of crapshoots. I must make do with the varlets and knaves who, if they were not selling stocks, would be dealing three-card monte on the street.

Madoff was promising his "victims" 18-20 percent per annum, and many of his victims still think his estate can be forced to make good on his promises. Some of them (about half) actually got out more money than they put into his Ponzi scheme, but that does not stop them from suing for the paper value of their portfolio. It is hard to imagine the impudent greed of people who did not lose anything but now want to rob investors who lost everything. Madoff should sue his clients for usury. They are like the people who got mortgages on houses they could not afford and now want the banks or the taxpayers to bail them out. Both are fools for thinking they could game the system and knaves for trying to pass the buck. W.C. Fields hit the nail on the American head: "You can't cheat an honest man. He has to have larceny in his heart in the first place."

What Fields called larceny in the heart is really only greed, our national vice. We Americans are not stingy with our money—quite the contrary—but we have to have it the way a junkie has to have heroin; and like the heroin addict, the more we have, the more we need. Don't take my word for it; listen to an expert on junk: "Junk is the ideal product . . . No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy. . . . The junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client."

William S. Burroughs knew a great deal about both kinds of junk. He was addicted to opiates for 50 years, but by inheritance he was a capitalist. His grandfather founded the Burroughs Adding Machine Company (since 1986, a part of Unisys), and his maternal uncle, Ivy Lee, was the p.r. genius who was hired to "burnish the family image" of John D. Rockefeller, a project that required more than the usual brass polish.

Since the 1980's conservative writers have attempted to mount a defense of the robber barons and wolves of Wall Street. The Morgans, Rockefellers, and Carnegies were farsighted pioneers who made America competitive. Until the recent crash and even after, conservative journalists praised Wall Street investment houses for their unselfish efforts to promote businesses and put Americans to work. Astronomical rates of interest or return are not usury so long as money is invested to help companies grow. Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein, in an interview with the London *Times*, insists that he and his company are "doing God's work." Blankfein is certainly qualified, since he is almost literally richer than God, earning $67 million in 2007 just before his clients lost about half their equity, and now owns, among much else, $500 million of Goldman Sachs stock.

America was always a promised land for hardworking people who were willing to take risks, but they were no greedier than the ordinary lot of humankind. It was the war profiteers of the 1860's and the stockjobbers of the Gilded Age who corrupted the national spirit. Mark Twain, who shared the greed of his age, lamented the loss of the gentler virtues of life, swept away in the torrents of gold-seeking and speculation. Recognizing our national addiction, he once observed that "A human being has a natural desire to have more of a good thing than he needs."

A libertarian would reply that "needs" rather begs the question, but then so does the libertarian reply. It is true that needs are to some extent subjective. Do I really need the bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue Label I was given for Christmas? I may think I do, but the truth is my need can be satisfied by plain old Dewar's or—and I cannot write this without shuddering—even Jim Beam. But in conceding a certain amount of elasticity to the concept of needs, we do not have to follow the libertarians over the cliff into a moral and aesthetic indifference that cannot

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distinguish between marital love and one-night stands, between Haydn and Khachaturian or between Khachaturian and Kanye West.

Perhaps we cannot agree on what constitutes a comfortable income that will satisfy our bourgeois needs, but we should be able to find a range: more than $50,000 per year but far less than Lloyd Blankfein's $67 million. If just men could agree on such a range, it would have nothing to do with any government policy, but it would help us to distinguish between the enterprising man who builds a useful business that gives employment to thousands and the greedy man who sells junk or manipulates paper in an everlasting pursuit of money for money's sake.

"WHO ARE YOU to judge?" ask the libertarians, rejecting out of hand any moral or spiritual authority that can set a limit to human needs and—even if they are nominal Christians—repudiating not only Aquinas and Augustine, but Peter and Paul, and Jesus Christ Himself, Who was foolish enough to say, "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Confronted with Saint Paul's admonitions against "covetousness," Christian libertarians—a phrase as oxymoronic as *Christian socialists*—respond with something like Calvin's interpretation of "covetousness" as "nothing more than an immoderate desire of gain," which leaves the door open to a life devoted to the getting and spending that men of the past five centuries have elevated to one of the highest virtues.

In fact, neither Catholic nor Anglican translations into English are much better: *Greed* and *avarice* convey a tone of moral disapprobation, while Paul uses a related pair of ordinary and nonjudgmental Greek words, the noun *pleonexia* and the verb *pleonktein*, which refer to the process or the inclination of having or getting more, which may imply "more than others" or "more than is due." A person afflicted with *pleonexia*, then, is addicted to getting more and more. It is thus misleading to speak of an "immoderate" desire for wealth, since Bill Gates, after making his first billion, would not have thought it immoderate or immoral to continue wasting his time on getting a second billion. At this point, it is not just greed but vanity that drives on a man like Gates or Warren Buffett, spoiled children with a Midas touch that makes their world as cold and dead as Midas' daughter.

The teaching of Christ and the apostles has nothing in common with socialism. Paul did not mean that Peter should not make an honest profit by selling Paul fish or Paul by selling Peter a tent. Paul took care of his own needs. Indeed, he makes it clear he does not want working people to subsidize the idle—even if the idle are preachers or prophets. He tells us to work hard and make an honest living for ourselves and our families, lest we burden our brothers or become a matter of scandal to nonbelievers. The stipulation is that the profit-taking must be constrained within limits, which brings us back to Bernie Madoff.

People like Madoff and Blankfein work within a system that is controlled by their money. We shall never know what kind of bribes and favors Madoff arranged for major politicians, but we do know that he was giving $25,000 per year to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and made major donations to those paragons of senatorial purity, Chuck Schumer and Chris Dodd. He may very well hope for a presidential pardon. Madoff is an old man, presumably in ill health. It would be cruel and inhuman not to let him spend his last days with his wife and children. What does Obama have to lose? Bill Clinton pardoned the equally odious Marc Rich, and Clinton himself is treated as a senior statesman, while his wife goes around the world pretending to be the secretary of state.

Among American politicians, Bill Clinton may be the living embodiment of swinish greed, a diabolical caricature of lechery and avarice that might have been drawn by Hieronymus Bosch, but he is hardly alone. Whatever we may say in public, Americans love scoundrels like Donald Trump and Rod Blagojevich, who is appearing on Trump's TV show *Celebrity Apprentice*. Since the days of Fisk and Gould, it has been an American dream to be rich enough to commit any sin we like with impunity. Such people do not seek humility from their mirrors but look into their flickering screens and see themselves as celebrities who transcend the laws of right and wrong. For them, there is no god but Mammon, and Mises is his prophet.

So long as we live like swine or dream of living like swine, we shall remain suckers forever, always eager to pick the money card up from the table, always sure we can beat the monte dealer on the street or the derivatives dealers on The Street. But there is an America that exists outside of Wall Street, Hollywood, and Vegas. There is still good stuff in many of us, and that is why crises often bring out the best in Americans. That is why I take hope from a financial crisis that has been aggravated by a disastrous presidency. If we can once give up our dreams of personal avarice and global power, we can go back to doing what we do best—minding our own business instead of taking over someone else's, rearing our own children instead of turning them over to other people, and, instead of watching, texting, and twittering, living our own lives. ◆

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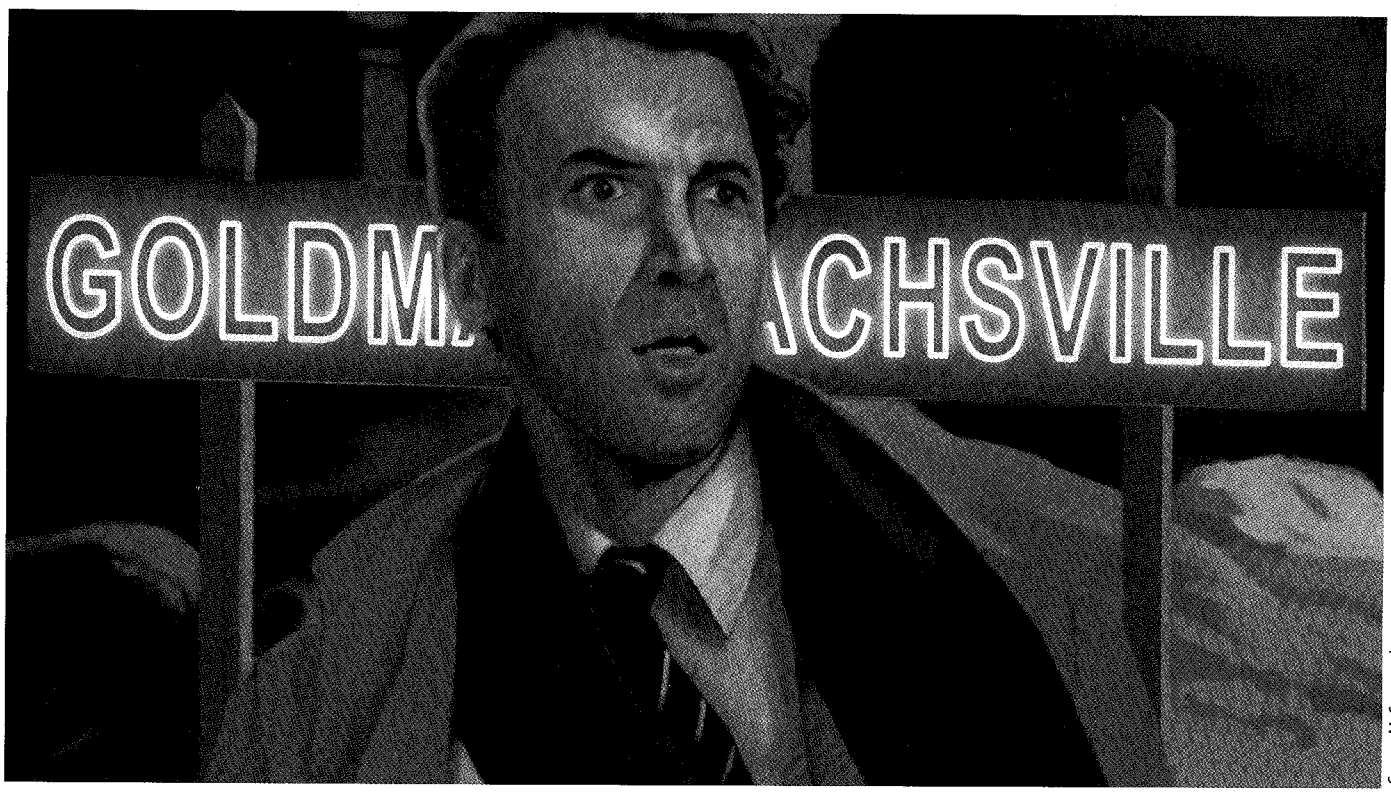

George McCartney, Jr.

Putting America Back to Work

by Tom Pauken

THE UNITED STATES is experiencing her highest national unemployment rate since the early 1980's. Back in 1981, in order to stimulate the creation of jobs in the private sector, President Reagan encouraged Congress to pass the Kemp-Roth Job Creation Act. Today, the Obama administration is doing nothing of the sort.

Most Americans are not even aware that, from 1999 through 2009, we had zero growth in private-sector employment. In fact, we lost more than a million private-sector jobs in those years. The only growth in employment was in government jobs.

During that same period, we lost one third of our U.S. manufacturing base—more than 5.5 million American manufacturing jobs have either disappeared or been shipped overseas. That is the logical result of a business tax system that turns the principles of a sound economy upside down.

The "new capitalism" we are living under is a far cry from the free-market system that made our economy so strong. Martin Wolf of the *Financial Times* (June 19, 2007) described the salient features of this "new capitalism": "We have . . . the triumph of the global over the local, of the speculator over the manager and the financier over the producer."

Why should our economy be dominated by Wall Street financial engineers and private-equity moguls rather than Main Street producers?

Today, many economists insist that a weakened U.S. dollar is the only way out of our unsustainable trade deficits, and their advice is being followed. In 2008, for the first time in decades, the Canadian dollar could buy more than the U.S. dollar, and the U.S. dollar was at its lowest value against the euro since that currency came into existence. The decline in our currency continued in 2009, while gold held up strongly against all paper currencies. How long can the dollar maintain its value, given the trillions of dollars in federal debt run up through the Bush-Obama stimulus packages? And who will buy all of our additional

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paper at today's low interest rates?

Inflation is running at a much higher rate than the official Consumer Price Index (CPI), which underweights the cost of food, energy, housing, and healthcare in its statistical formula. Real inflation in the United States was running anywhere from seven to ten percent in late 2007. We have only to look at the examples of the German Weimar Republic and Argentina at various stages of her history to see what can happen when a debased currency spirals out of control and loses most of its value: You destroy your middle class and your economy.

The combination of out-of-control government spending and a fatally flawed tax policy is lethal. We cannot expect other nations to continue lending us $2.5 billion a day to keep our economy afloat—especially when they lose money in the process as the dollar declines in value. In this global economy, there are far more stable and attractive options for foreign investors than buying our government paper.

LENIN'S TIMELESS QUESTION confronts us: "What is to be done?" How do we put Main Street America back in charge of corporate America? The most honest and prudent approach is as simple as it is difficult: We must rethink the way our government spends our money. And we need to figure out a way to level the playing field with our trading partners and stop the steady loss of good-paying manufacturing jobs to other countries.

The prospect of trillion-dollar trade and budget deficits for the next five to ten years is a dagger aimed at the heart of our way of life. The profligacy of the Bush and Obama years must come to an end. Merely "slowing the rate of growth" will not be sufficient to stop the bleeding of an economy in decline.

The Obama administration is even worse than the Bush administration when it comes to excessive spending, and the Obama stimulus package of nearly $800 billion had next to nothing in it to encourage job creation in the private sector. Government cannot spend its way out of this crisis.

A tax policy concocted by Wall Street financiers, globalists, and an army of special-interest lobbyists has led us to the brink of disaster. The quickest way to reduce our trade deficit and rebuild our manufacturing base is to reform our business tax system along the lines recommended by Austin, Texas, economist David Hartman. Mr. Hartman, the chairman of the Lone Star Foundation, has built a number of successful companies in manufacturing and financial services. Among his proposals for tax reform is an eight-percent consumption tax, which would apply to all imports but not to U.S. exports. (Thus, it is "border-adjusted.") This "value-added tax" (VAT), he estimates, would replace our current corporate-income tax and reduce the estate tax (the infamous "death tax"), as well as fund a tax credit that would be applied against the employer's share of FICA taxes.

The Hartman proposal would reward U.S.-based businesses for corporate investment and savings in the United States and would end the punitive taxes imposed by our existing system.

Such a change in tax policy would make the United States competitive by removing the advantage our trading partners enjoy as a result of the border-adjusted VATs they have put in place to help their domestic companies. This revenue-neutral policy would also be much less of a burden on the U.S. economy than the current tax system. The VAT would allow for the expensing of fixed investment, eliminating double taxation of investment. This would result in an accelerated growth of savings and investment and create private-sector jobs. In the long run, the VAT would bring in a lot more money than the taxes it would replace, because the U.S. economy would grow much faster. We would have a tax system that would encourage companies to create jobs in the United States and keep them here.

The U.S. business tax code, with its high rate of 35 percent, encourages companies to send jobs overseas, move American manufacturing facilities to foreign countries, and take on high levels of debt in order to avoid taxes.

The Hartman proposal would reward U.S.-based businesses for corporate investment and savings in the United States and would end the punitive taxes imposed by our existing system. With this clearheaded, sensible reform, exports would increase significantly, and we would begin to rebuild our manufacturing base and lessen our dependence on foreign energy and imported consumer goods.

As Mr. Hartman points out, since the Industrial Revolution, manufacturing has been the leading source of

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competitive advantage in terms of income, wealth, and military strength. The restoration and preservation of our manufacturing sector is vital to our national interest. Our manufacturing superiority helped us win World War II and was a key advantage over the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Hartman's tax proposal would also cut our soaring trade deficit in half and reinvigorate our middle class.

Our current tax system forces many family businesses onto the auction block.

If the proposal were enacted, American-based businesses would be encouraged to save and invest, and the tax advantages of heavy corporate debt would be gone. That would be good news for American workers, our manufacturing base, and shareholders in U.S. companies. Adopting a border-adjusted value-added tax would reduce the outsourcing of jobs, encourage long-term investment in U.S. companies, and put business owners back in charge of the American economy. And providing businesses with a tax credit, funded from VAT revenues, for the employer's share of FICA taxes would stimulate job creation in the United States.

Conservatives have long set their sights on the inheritance tax, and for good reason. Reducing or getting rid of the inheritance tax would ensure that successful family businesses could be passed on to the next generation. Our current tax system forces many family businesses onto the auction block. After a taxpayer has paid taxes on all income and assets for a lifetime, inheritance taxation is pure confiscation from the family and lost long-term investment for the country.

Such a change in our economic policy could not come at a more critical time. The American middle class is disappearing. As economist Martin Hutchinson points out,

> The declining share of low and moderate income workers in the American pie is undeniable; the relative share of such workers peaked as long ago as 1973. For those with only high school qualifications or less, their absolute earnings peaked in 1973 and have declined substantially since then.

Hutchinson cites a Center for Economic and Policy Research study which "shows that the share of 'good jobs' in the US economy has fallen substantially during the 2001-07 business cycle, where a 'good job' was defined as one that pays at least $17 an hour (the median wage rate in 1979) and offers employer-provided health insurance and a pension." Hutchinson calls for a "new intellectual paradigm" to address this "impoverishment of the American middle class." That is what the Hartman plan represents.

A border-adjusted value-added tax could win broad bipartisan support—as well as support from corporate America and labor unions. Its likely opponents are the foreign nations that currently enjoy a huge trading advantage over us, the Wall Street financiers and private equity funds that benefit from the current tax system, and our domestic socialists who favor high taxes on everyone who has money and on all private businesses. Since all of these special interests have powerful connections in Washington, it will take a concerted, targeted effort to overcome their opposition, but it would be worth the work. The Hartman plan offers us a concrete and achievable means to address immediately the most serious economic threats that we face.

A LOT OF WHAT WE HAVE TO DO to get America back on the right track is common sense. In addition to having an economic policy that rewards companies for creating and keeping jobs here in the United States, we need to return to a sound dollar policy. Our schools must do a better job of teaching the basics at the elementary and secondary levels. We need to encourage more of our young people to take advantage of the opportunities awaiting them in the skilled trades. And we must restore that strong work ethic which once was an essential feature of the American character. With respect to an increasingly remote federal government, we need to restore federalism—with governmental power closest to the people, wherever possible.

Today, Americans face the most serious set of challenges in my lifetime. Previous generations of Americans have risen to the occasion. We can as well. Indeed, we must, for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

Most Americans sense the seriousness of the moment. Sometimes it takes a crisis to wake us up and get us to do what is necessary to head in the right direction again.

Let's make the United States the strongest economy in the world again—and put America back to work.

Tom Pauken is the author, most recently, of Bringing America Home.

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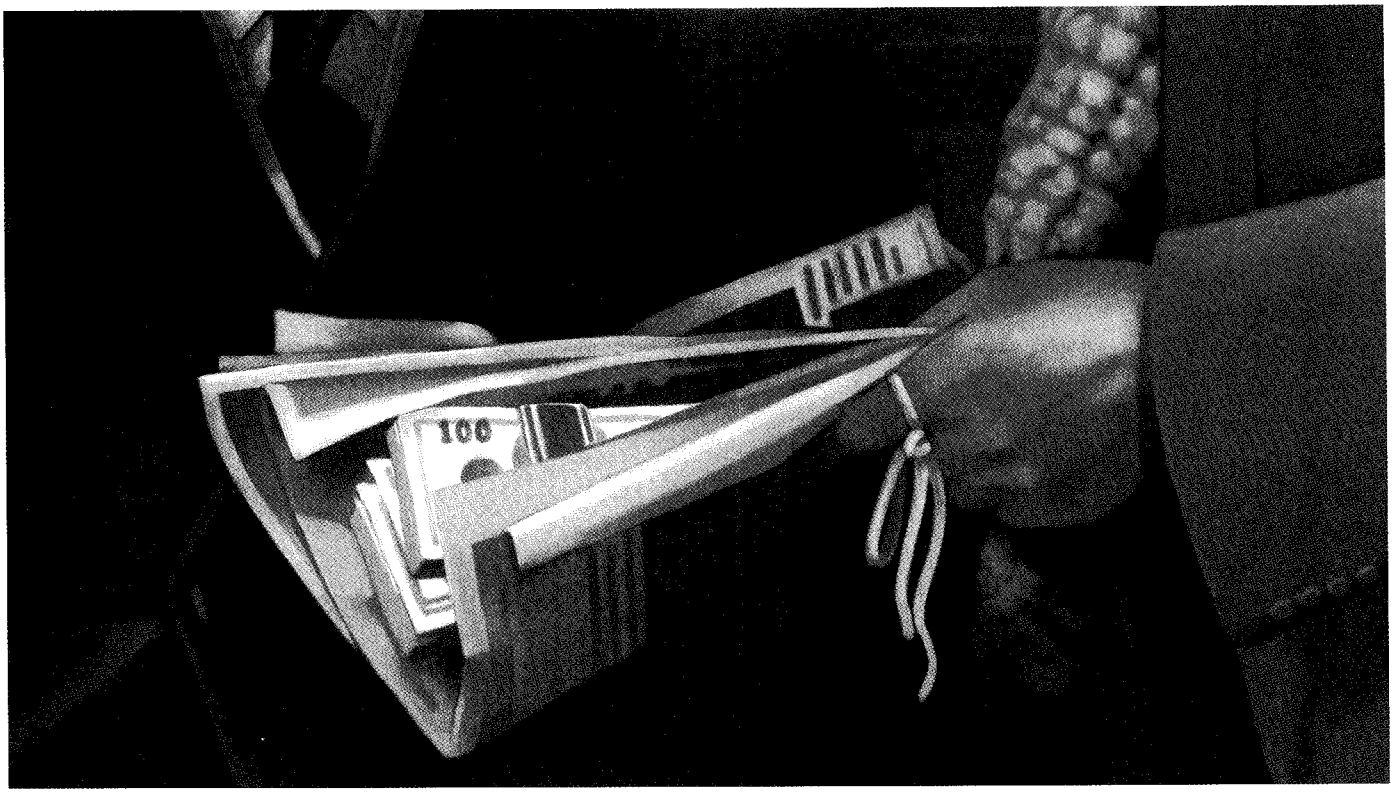

George McCartney, Jr.

Bringing Back the Old Economy

by Tom Piatak

In 1960, my father attended what was then Case Institute of Technology. Even though it was the most expensive school in Ohio, he was able to pay his tuition with his summer jobs. When he graduated, mechanical engineers were in demand; American manufacturing was booming, and the jobs being offered to good young engineers generally included the promise of a pension and the expectation of job security. In our neighborhood, most of the families I knew had a father working in manufacturing and a mother taking care of the children and the home. Not all those working in manufacturing were engineers; many were high-school graduates who worked on the plant floor. But all made enough money to support their families in comfortable, middle-class fashion, without the need for a second income.

The manufacturing sector they worked in was focused overwhelmingly on the American market. American tools processed American parts for American customers. People were wary of foreign products; their instinctive patriotism fully applied to the economic realm. Divorce was virtually unheard of—I knew one divorced family on our street. People did not often change employers, so few people moved off our street. Most of us were able to see our relatives on a regular basis. I saw my paternal grandparents at least once per week, and my mom's parents regularly. Also missing from our street were liberals, although many of our neighbors voted Democratic. In 1972, we had a mock election at my grade school, and the children voted as their parents would, with Richard Nixon crushing George McGovern by a four-to-one margin. Our congressman was Ron Mottl, a crew-cut-wearing Democrat who came home each weekend, slept on a cot in his Washington office during the week, and was best known as an opponent of forced busing. He also represented his constituents by voting for the Reagan tax cuts, a move that cost him his seat after vengeful Democrats in the state legislature redrew the boundaries of his district.

Of course, all of this has changed. Private-sector pen-

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sions and job security have largely disappeared. Most colleges are so expensive that no one could earn enough over the summer to pay the tuition. People change jobs regularly, often moving far from home. As a result, many children grow up seeing their grandparents only a few times per year and their aunts, uncles, and cousins not at all. Divorce is commonplace, and women who stay home with their children are in the minority. But for years, we were told—by Democrats and Republicans, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*—that we should not worry as manufacturing dwindled and trade deficits mounted. We were creating a new economy, where the loss of dirty manufacturing jobs no one wanted to do would be more than offset by all sorts of wonderful high-tech and service jobs. Any problems could be solved by more education, which would enable all of us to find our place in the "global economy." The relentless drumbeat of globalization was designed to change attitudes, to divorce patriotism from economic decisions, and to accustom Americans to foreign goods displacing American goods and foreigners taking jobs from Americans. Feminism proved a handy way to disguise a declining standard of living, since the entry of mothers into the workplace was presented as social progress rather than economic necessity.

For a time, it even seemed to work, as the tech and real-estate bubbles pushed the stock market ever upward. In 1999, an incredulous Tim Russert asked Pat Buchanan on *Meet the Press* how he could square his economic warnings with the soaring Dow. Buchanan's response was that America was selling off the family silver, and that we could only do that once. We can now see that Buchanan was right, and that the promise of the New Economy was a mirage: The average hourly wage for American workers, adjusted for inflation, has risen only 36 cents in 33 years, from $16.39 per hour in 1973 to $16.75 per hour in 2006. There has been no growth in real income this century. Although entertaining yourself with electronic gadgets is far cheaper today than it was in 1973, the reverse is true for healthcare, housing, and education. In 1970, the price of an average home was twice a young couple's income; by 1998, that price was four times a young couple's income. The cost of healthcare and education has greatly outstripped inflation for many years. Many families have maintained a middle-class lifestyle only by going deeply into debt. As David Hartman—another Case engineering grad—noted in *Chronicles* ("Anatomy of a Meltdown," *News*, April 2008), from 1997 to 2007 there was a "49-percent increase in household debt compared with incomes, as Americans spent their money on imports and unaffordable residences."

The decline of the U.S. manufacturing sector in the era of globalization has been undeniable. Over five million American manufacturing jobs have disappeared since the beginning of this century. To take the seven sectors that have formed the backbone of the economy in my home state of Ohio, 1997-2007 saw imports of motor vehicles and parts increase by 36.7 percent, imports of fabricated metals increase by 64.7 percent, imports of chemicals increase by 29 percent, imports of primary metal products increase by 52.5 percent, imports of food products increase by 39.9 percent, imports of machinery increase by 39.9 percent, and imports of plastics increase by 61.3 percent. Of the 1,344 major industries tracked by the Department of Commerce, America runs a trade deficit in two thirds, and the cumulative trade deficits between 2000 and 2007 were a staggering $4.5 trillion, in large part because of the many ways our foreign competitors protect their home markets. One way they do so is through a border-adjusted value-added tax, under which imports are taxed and exports earn a tax rebate. By 2006, a foreign VAT applied to 94 percent of U.S. exports and imports, and the combined amount of rebates earned by foreign companies for their imports to America and taxes imposed on U.S. exports was $428 billion. Besides decimating American manufacturing, our trade policies have undermined American independence. Foreign interests now own over half of the debt of the U.S. Treasury, a third of U.S. corporate bonds, and a sixth of U.S. corporate assets. Indeed, as Pat Choate writes,

> The profile of the U.S. trade position today is that of a nation being economically colonized—one that is purchasing high value-added commodities and manufactured goods from abroad and paying for them with the export of agricultural commodities, massive foreign borrowing, and the liquidation of its own national assets.

Replying that the United States survived the disappearance of buggy-whip makers misses the point: The industries we have abandoned have not disappeared; they have only disappeared from America. Indeed, communist China is becoming a world power by manufacturing the products our elites thought were beneath us. The decline of American manufacturing is not the natural result of Japan and Germany rebuilding their factories after World War II, but of our decision to allow Japanese and German goods unfettered access to our market. Nor can the outsourcing of manufacturing be justified by Ricardian comparative ad-

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vantage, which assumes the immobility of labor and capital. Instead, as Paul Craig Roberts points out, it is a form of labor arbitrage, as mobile capital seeks the cheapest labor it can find. And the same mentality that led to the disappearance of much of manufacturing is now leading to the disappearance of the service jobs we had been told would sustain us. Princeton economist Alan Blinder has estimated that 28-39 million jobs are offshoreable in the near future. Industries are being told that the smart thing to do is to send their accounting and computer and engineering jobs overseas. I recently came across a trucking-industry publication that chided American trucking companies for being too patriotic and ignoring the profits that could be made by sending their accounting work to India. Then there is the other side of globalization, the mass importation of foreigners to drive down the wages paid to Americans. This phenomenon is hardly limited to agricultural laborers. We import 65,000 H-1B visa holders each year to do engineering work in the United States, and legislation has been introduced to triple that number. Since the U.S. government is simultaneously importing foreigners to drive down engineering wages and pursuing free-trade policies that destroy the manufacturing sector, is it any wonder that Americans with an aptitude for engineering are getting degrees in law or business?

Of course, not all parts of our New Economy are faring poorly. As John Derbyshire keeps reminding us, government is doing very well. The average government worker now makes more than the average employee in the private sector. The richest metropolitan area in the country is the D.C. metro area. Of the 50 counties with the highest percentage of people aged 25-34 earning over $100,000 per year, 16 of them are in the Washington area. Then there is the financial sector. Between 1973 and 1985, the share of domestic profits going to the financial-services industry was never higher than 16 percent. That number has risen to 41 percent. And there is this arresting statistic, which a commenter noted on Steve Sailer's website: In 2008, the three top U.S. hedge-fund managers earned $2.5 billion, $2 billion, and $1.5 billion respectively—in total, more than the 70,000 people who graduated with bachelor's degrees in engineering in 2008 put together. Their average starting salary was $56,921.

Is an economy dominated by the government and financial sectors good for America? The downside of too much government is well known to conservatives, and the downside of having too large a financial sector should be increasingly clear. Wall Street does not do much for Main Street. Lawrence Mitchell, a professor of business law at George Washington University, notes that

> empirical evidence is clear that the American public stock market rarely has been a significant factor in financing industrial enterprises in the United States. The only American business sector to rely upon public stock issuances as an important source of financing public activity is the financial industry itself.

Mitchell's examination of data going back to the 1950's leads him to conclude that "America's economy is increasingly based on finance, and our public financial markets principally are financing finance." That is not to say that Wall Street does not have an impact on Main Street. Wall Street has acted as a cheerleader for globalization for many years.

And Wall Street helped trigger the latest recession. As University of South Carolina law professor William Quirk noted in *Chronicles* ("The Financial Crisis," *News*, February 2009),

> There are two crises. One is the "troubled asset" crisis, caused by subprime mortgages. That problem is finite and should be fairly easy to solve: Either let the loans fall where they may or guarantee the bad mortgages. But amazingly, the total losses from the crisis far exceed the bad mortgages, which brings us to the second crisis—the derivative crisis where "sophisticated" parties bet on anything.

"Sophisticated parties" is a reference to Lawrence Summers' testimony to Congress during the Clinton presidency, in which he urged that derivatives be unregulated, because they concerned only "sophisticated financial institutions." The cost of this second crisis continues to mount. As Quirk notes, the Office of Special Inspector General for TARP pegs the cost of shoring up the financial sector at $23 trillion, and 40 percent of bank profits still come from the murky world of derivatives, with who knows what time bombs waiting to explode. Suddenly, having an economy dominated by finance rather than manufacturing no longer seems like such a good idea.

Those who led the cheers for globalization did not see the collapse that was coming. Phil Gramm, who once called Wall Street "a holy place," dismissed the looming crisis in July 2008 as a "mental recession" and castigated those worried about the economy as "whiners." Of course, Gramm himself is somewhat removed from the realities of economic life, having been an investment banker and lobbyist for a foreign bank since 2002, and a government employee for

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the preceding 35 years. Even more incredibly, Gramm asserted that "We've never been more dominant; we've never had more natural advantages than we have today." Oops.

Thomas Friedman, the grand panjandrum of globalization, recently admitted that education is not enough to help most Americans overcome the negative effects of globalization. Friedman quoted Lawrence Katz, a labor-market expert at Harvard, as saying,

> If you think about the labor market today, the top half of the college market, those with the high-end analytical and problem-solving skills who can compete on the world market or game the financial system or deal with new government regulations, have done great. But the bottom half of the top, those engineers and programmers working on more routine tasks and not actively engaged in developing new ideas or recombining existing technologies or thinking about what new customers want, have done poorly. They've been much more exposed to global competitors that make them easily substitutable.

Friedman continues with the bad news:

> Those at the high end of the bottom half—high school grads in construction or manufacturing—have been clobbered by global competition and immigration, added Katz. . . . Just being an average accountant, lawyer, contractor or assembly-line worker is not the ticket it used to be. . . . So our schools have a doubly hard task now—not just improving reading, writing and arithmetic but entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. Bottom line: We're not going back to the good old days without fixing our schools as well as our banks.

Actually, the real bottom line is this: Why did anyone think that a system that is rendering more and more Americans economically redundant was a good idea?

The Reagan Democrats I grew up with have largely disappeared, and those who have benefited from globalization generally display little enthusiasm for any variety of conservatism. Another high priest of the globalization cult, Richard Florida, has argued that the key to prosperity is having a large homosexual community in your city, and David Frum approvingly quoted a friend as saying that one of the Motor City's major problems was that there were "Not enough gays." As Derek Leaberry, a commenter at *ChroniclesMagazine.org*, pithily wrote,

> An economy dominated by the therapeutic state, government workers, schoolteachers, flabby-handed computer geeks, restaurant chefs, sommeliers, Wall Street gangsters, and mall securitymen will be one that is antagonistic to conservative values. That is what the future holds if absolute free trade reigns globally. Karl Marx would be overjoyed.

Digging out of this mess will be difficult. It may be impossible. But any solution will have to include a return to the economic policies that made America the greatest manufacturing power the world has known. As Paul Craig Roberts wrote last February, "America's 20th century economic success was based on two things. Free trade was not one of them. America's economic success was based on protectionism . . . and on British indebtedness, which destroyed the British pound as world reserve currency." He added, "The American economy has gone away. It is not coming back until free trade myths are buried six feet under."

Extricating ourselves from globalization is not just a matter of economic survival, but one of national survival. Back in December 1989, Sam Francis warned us of what was at stake when he advocated a new nationalism in his monthly column in these pages:

> Some Americans, especially the cosmo-conservatives in Manhattan and Washington, may fantasize that globalization will yield another "American century," with Yankee know-how tossing institutional and ideological candy-bars to fetching senoritas in the Third World. But blue-collar workers in Detroit and construction men in Texas probably have a better grip on the realities of globalization as they watch their own jobs disappear before Asian competition and illegal immigrants. Globalization doesn't mean that America will prevail, but that it will vanish among the laser beams and electrons by which the planet is to be held together . . .

America has not yet vanished among those laser beams and electrons, but she will, unless we finally heed the words of Sam Francis and the other patriots who warned us of what was coming.

Contributing editor Tom Piatak presented a version of this article at the H.L. Mencken Club and the John Randolph Club in November 2009.

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Sam Francis's Mad Tea Party

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

READING UP FOR A BOOK on the fate of democracy since Tocqueville published *Democracy in America* in 1835, I recently came across an excellent study, *Aristocratic Liberalism: The Social and Political Thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville*, by Alan S. Kahan. Professor Kahan includes these men in a group of what he calls "aristocratic liberals," together with Walter Bagehot, George Eliot, Gustave Flaubert, and others. Aristocratic humanism, according to Kahan, extended the modern humanism of the 18th century by adding to the established conception of negative liberties a notion of positive ones, and by endowing the new humanist thought with a teleological dimension that reflected the liberal aristocrats' conviction that liberty, individuality, and diversity are essential to human thought and action, to the possibility of progress through change, and to the mental and moral benefits of education, which they regarded as an acceptable and effective substitution for the classical notion of virtue. But aristocratic liberalism's interests were fundamentally conservative. While recognizing what seemed to it a universal demand for democratic equality, aristocratic liberalism wished above everything to protect and defend liberty against the forces that threatened liberty in its own name. "I have," Tocqueville wrote, "one passion, the love of liberty and human dignity." Aristocratic liberalism sought a society that would be free, ordered, and, in the classic European sense of the word, civilized.

In the context even of their age, the aristocratic liberals were liberal without being democratic, and certainly not revolutionary. They wanted constitutional government, limited suffrage, decentralization, and active local governments. And they advocated a political education for the electorate that was basically aristocratic in outline. Mill argued that the chief role of government should be to act as an educative agency; Burckhardt devoted his career to the attempt to preserve the old, humane, liberal-aristocratic ideal. Yet there was neither popular acceptance of such an ideal among the peoples of Europe nor the human material through which to realize it. Tocqueville and his sort were not historical pessimists, but they viewed the possible displacement of the new democracies by despotism as a perennial threat. Especially, they felt that time was not on their side. They were right. Compared with popular and influential liberals between 1830 and 1870 they were considerably less optimistic, had a more restrictive view of the state, and worried more about class antagonisms, and they could not overcome their innate distaste for the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. Tocqueville's books were read and respected by educated and highly influential people, on the Continent and in England, yet their practical influence, in Professor Kahan's estimation, was minimal. "Aristocratic liberalism," he concludes, "was condemned to the sidelines because it refused to link its particular elitism to any of the elite or the aspiring elite groups that might have given it power, refused to make it the bearer of its values." Reading these words, I was instantly reminded of Samuel Francis's criticism of what he called the "beautiful losers" of the Old American Right in the post-World War II era, who lost their bid for political influence and power "because there existed in American society and political culture no significant set of interests to which its ideas could attach themselves."

SAM FRANCIS has been dead these five years, almost to the day as I write, and so it is possible that his newspaper columns, essays, and books—perhaps even his name—are unknown to the latest generation of American conservatives, including those who have followed the rise of the Tea Party movement over the past year and witnessed the unprecedented descent of the late Edward Kennedy's seat in the U.S. Senate to a hitherto unknown Republican state senator named Scott Brown. Readers of Francis, whether friend or enemy, will be familiar with his powerful exegesis of the political thought of James Burnham, his careful studies of what he called "the Soviet strategy of terror," and his unflagging resistance, throughout his too-short career, to mass immigration to the United States and Europe. Yet Francis's name is associated most distinctly with his advocacy of a "revolution from the middle" led by what he and sociologist Donald Warren (also deceased) called "Middle American Radicals," or MARs—plus a wise and elegant volume, *Beautiful Losers: Essays on the Failure of American Conservatism*, first published in 1993. In *Beautiful Losers* Francis makes an extensive and considered case for the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the Old Right and for the need of a Middle American political strategy based on the recognition that the old republican establishment the Old Right attempted to defend has collapsed, leaving

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the vast American middle classes below it to confront the managerial and bureaucratic class that deposed the Old Establishment in the 1930's, 40's, and 50's.

Briefly sketched, Francis's argument runs as follows. Liberalism is the ideology of a class invested with multiple self-seeking interests, not a coherent political philosophy. Even so, the problem the United States confronts today is the dominance of the managerial establishment itself, not of the liberal clichés and facile slogans it promotes. The managerial elite, usually called by neoconservatives the "New Class," having displaced and partly destroyed the Old Establishment (WASP in religion, regionally oriented, entrepreneurial by nature, and traditionally minded), oppresses the scorned American middle and lower-middle classes, while favoring the interests of elites above them and catering to the demands of the underclass below. Unlike the Old Right, which lacked the requisite social base, the energized New Right, with the Middle American Radicals for its demographic foundation and the Sunbelt states as its regional redoubt, is now positioned to oppose, and finally to overthrow, the decadent managerial class that stifles, overregulates, pillages, and despises it in the name of equality, minority rights, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, internationalism, postmodern culture, and post-Christian morality. The New Right is nationalist rather than anticommunist, favors the restoration of intermediary institutions between the federal state and the American people, and looks to a strong, populist presidency as the means to cut through the existing oligarchies that would oppose any such restoration. The New Right, though it detests the New Class establishment, is suspicious also of the Old Establishment that preceded it: Indeed, it is suspicious of all establishments. The New Right, then, is not conservative, not even in terms of backward-leap-frog conservatism. It therefore, Francis argues, has need of "a new ideology, formula, or political theory that can win the loyalties and represent the interests of its social base and rationalize its quest for social and political power."

Certainly the Tea Party movement, whose current heroine, Sarah Palin, and her family are really only trailer trash from the trashiest state in the Union, has nothing elitist about it, drawn as it so observably is from the wide ranks of the middle-middle and lower-middle classes.

It is unlikely that anyone familiar with Sam Francis's writings has not had occasion over the past year—and most especially in January, when Scott Brown defeated Martha Coakley, attorney general of Massachusetts, in the special Senate race—to wonder whether the Tea Party movement in particular, and the altered state of public opinion that got Brown elected generally, might not represent an early stage in the fulfillment of Francis's grand political design.

Massachusetts could scarcely be located farther from the Sunbelt, where Francis expected his MARs revolution to take shape. All the better, one might say: The events in Massachusetts this winter suggest that the New Right has advanced further, under cover, than anyone, the politicians and the media included, had expected. But if that is indeed the case, how then did Barack Obama manage to carry Massachusetts by 26 percentage points in 2008? The notion that MARs sprang up in their legions out of the Bay State's stony soil over a period of 14 months in sufficient numbers to equal 52 percent of those who turned out to vote is hardly a convincing one. A more coherent explanation is that the Massachusetts voters are themselves incoherent, reflecting the political incoherence of the wider American political system at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. Nearly 50 years ago, the English philosopher Kenneth Minogue wrote that, from the moment when the germ of liberalism enters and infects a society, that society is, sooner or later, doomed. He was right, and a half-century later Professor Minogue's liberalism has evolved into what James Kalb, in *The Tyranny of Liberalism*, calls advanced liberalism. How could the citizens of a country with no racial, ethnic, or cultural identity, no agreed-upon history, no generally accepted system of morality and a confusion between the sexes, no sense of national values beyond abstracted, ahistorical principles, no consensus regarding either the limits of the law or the nature of law itself, no notion of regional or national obligation, no knowledge of or feeling for the past and only a shallow ideological view of the future—how could such a people possibly think and act, politically, in anything like a coherent manner? Americans are currently suffering from an epidemic of mass mental confusion pro-

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duced by a supposedly rational political theory that is at best only a pseudophilosophy.

This is no more than to say that the 52 percent of voters in the special election in Massachusetts were not all Tea Party voters, which no one, of course, has claimed. Tea Party has expanded in its first year to the proportions of a national movement, of which its Massachusetts, even its New England, component is doubtless a small percentage. At this writing, the National Tea Party Convention has just met in Nashville, where, as with all gatherings of "conservatives," real or bogus (CINOs, one might say), the various eccentric factions appeared to experience difficulties in reconciling their many differences. Still, the general Tea Party platform demanding smaller government, lower taxes, a recognition of states' rights under the Tenth Amendment, and enhanced national security are consistent enough with Francis's insistence that "The strategic objective of the New Right must be the localization, privatization, and decentralization of the managerial apparatus of power." So next we may ask what, if anything, might make Tea Party a more politically potent and significant phenomenon than previous populist movements proved to be, including the Populist Party of William Jennings Bryan, George Wallace's third-party presidential bid, and Pat Buchanan's pitchfork campaign and Ross Perot's Reform Party in the 1990's. Populism has a relatively long history in the United States, but that history has been one of co-optation, disappointment, and disaster.

No one, not even in our era of ideological anti-elitism, has ever denied the plain fact that the U.S. government was the creation of a tiny elite—the elitist elite, indeed, in American history. Sam Francis viewed his MARs as a subelite, which, he predicted, would in time become the dominant elite, replacing the degenerate ruling one. He claimed, I think, too much for them. Certainly the Tea Party movement, whose current heroine, Sarah Palin, and her family are really only trailer trash from the trashiest state in the Union, has nothing elitist about it, drawn as it so observably is from the wide ranks of the middle-middle and lower-middle classes. There is an ambiguity in Francis's theory that, so far as I know, he never attempted to resolve, and that is how the MARs, even granting them status as a subelite, could possibly establish themselves as the country's ruling political and—still more difficult to achieve—social elite. That is to say, Francis never explains, except in the most general terms, how the MARs masses might be inspired and organized to accomplish so great a victory. Would they, for instance, require political organizers, such as the Bolsheviks provided to the Russian people? If so, who would these people be? Samuel Todd Francis, Ph.D. (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), and a direct descendant of the family of Mary Todd Lincoln, and his colleagues? But MARs have no affinity or liking for scholars of British history and scions of the upper classes: That is precisely one of those characteristics that identifies them as MARs in the first place. Or, would they jump-start and organize themselves—as, one might argue, the Tea Party people are doing today? But, if they are to become the nation's dominant elite, MARs must start thinking like an elite, a feat comparable to that of a newly elected British Labour M.P. from the Transportation Union who somehow succeeded in assuming the class consciousness of the duke of Gloucester. The fact is, a true elite never establishes itself by force or at the electoral booth: It is developed historically and trained up over a substantial period of time to exercise its privileges and assume its proper responsibilities. Sarah Palin, a blue-collar girl reared in Wasilla, is not prepared to govern anything more civilized than the state of Alaska.

The awful truth is that the present establishment exists for the very good reason that it was created by, and reflects, the social and political arrangements underlying modernity, which is to say of the modern scientific and technological world.

Indeed, the ruling liberal-managerial elite's greatest fault is its own inability to think like an elite instead of as members of a dominant meritocracy. The complaint against our present ruling class should be less that it is an ill-founded and decadent elite than that it is an antitraditional and revolutionary one, dedicated to destroying everything that a genuine elite—an aristocracy—is keen to preserve, beginning with the welfare of the people and the future of the nation with which it was entrusted. According to Flannery O'Connor's murderous Misfit, in raising the dead, Christ "thrown everything off balance." As The

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Misfit thought Christ had done, so an anti-establishment establishment has thrown the United States and the rest of the Western world off balance, very likely with fatal consequences. Western political theory is simply unable to accommodate the fact of an elite that is revolutionary and destructive rather than traditional and conservative. The ages-old theory of mixed government is fundamentally incompatible with so hideous and unnatural a thing.

The awful truth is that the present establishment—the managerial state, the New Class, the liberal establishment, call it what you will—exists for the very good reason that it was created by, and reflects, the social and political arrangements underlying modernity, which is to say of the modern scientific and technological world. (The fact says even more about modernity than it does about liberalism.) Elites never create societies; societies, rather, give rise to elites. It is a valid question why our Western elite should be a liberal, rather than a conservative, one. Modern China, for example, is ruled by conservatives—conservative in a certain sense, anyway. And here is where liberalism comes into the story: liberalism, the dominant pseudophilosophy in the West, beginning in the late Middle Ages. And after it, advanced liberalism, which may well have developed at an earlier stage in history than Mr. Kalb suggests in his wonderful book. Advanced liberalism is the result of the managerial elite's discovery that, for it, liberalism is (in Sam Francis's words) "a useful and indeed indispensable formula for rationalizing its existence and power." Unfortunately, the sort of interests, knowledge, and skills that the liberal establishment possesses and that the Middle American Radicals, as we know them today, lack are necessary to providing the overwhelming mass of the American public with what it wants, or thinks it wants, or has been reeducated into thinking it ought to want. Liberalism, as Kalb suggests, must ultimately collapse under the weight of its own contradictions, thus revealing its philosophical and political pretensions for the frauds they are. In that case, the end of the liberal establishment will have been systemic rather than political, as, indeed, were most if not all of history's great earthquakes—very much including the sweeping social-democratic revolution that the aristocratic liberals foresaw, but were unable to prevent.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is Chronicles' *senior editor for books.*

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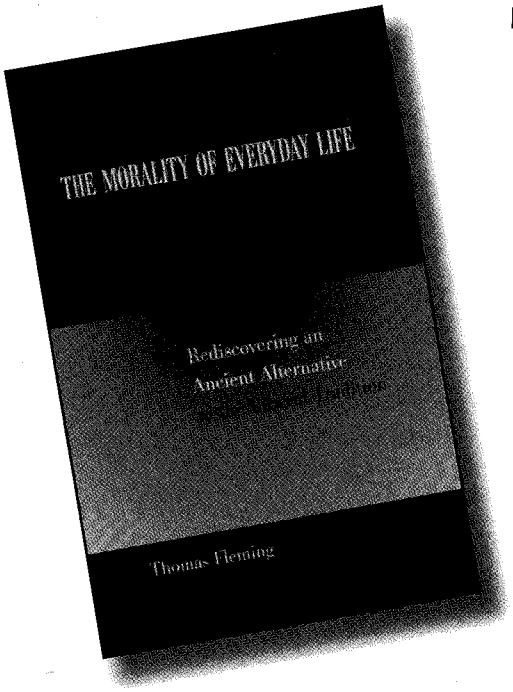

The Morality of Everyday Life

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by Thomas Fleming

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Rothbard Was Right!

As the Tea Partiers swarm town-hall meetings, and talk of nullification, the Tenth Amendment, and even secession is in the air, I can't help thinking, *Rothbard was right!*

That's Murray Newton Rothbard (1926-95), the libertarian economist and theorist whose uncompromising intelligence instructed an entire generation of the freedom movement's leading lights. Rothbard's career spanned the gap between the demise of the Old Right and the rise of the Buckleyite "New Right," which forswore the older movement's "isolationism" and embraced a crusading interventionism and all that goes with it. As Buckley put it in an article for *Commonweal* back in the 50's,

> We have to accept Big Government for the duration [of the Cold War]—for neither an offensive nor defensive war can be waged given our present government skills, except through the instrument of a totalitarian bureaucracy within our shores.

This view represented a break with the Old Right's populist perspective, which saw the New Deal and FDR's "brain trust" as the incarnation of the "revolutionaries in spectacles," as Garet Garrett called them. The Old Right saw the New Deal as a revolution from above, one in which the elites in business, media, and the academy sought to supplant the old America. Their activism was informed by what Rothbard called (in 1992) "the basic right-wing populist insight":

> [T]he old America of individual liberty, private property, and minimal government has been replaced by a coalition of politicians and bureaucrats allied with, and even dominated by, powerful corporate and Old Money financial elites . . . and the New Class of technocrats and intellectuals, including Ivy League academics and media elites, who constitute the opinion-molding class in society. In short, we are ruled by an updated, twentieth-century coalition of Throne and Altar, except that this Throne is various big business groups, and the Altar is secular, statist intellectuals, although mixed in with the secularists is a judicious infusion of Social Gospel, mainstream Christians.

This is the worldview of the Tea Partiers, who are now spurning the GOP and the establishment conservatives and forming their own paleo-constitutionalist critique that mirrors the populism of the Old Right in every respect.

The right-wing populist trend in American politics was derailed by Buckley & Co., who abhorred populism and sought to defend the American national-security state against assaults from both the left and the "far" right. With the end of the Cold War, this populist spirit reappeared in the Buchanan brigades and now is rising again with renewed strength.

The Tea Party movement, which encompasses a wide range of local, antitax, pro-liberty groups, really began to gain momentum with the bank bailout and the moves by the Obamaites to take control of large swathes of the American economy.

It's no accident that both David Frum and the liberal media are appalled by this Poujadist upsurge from below: the former because all neocons hate populism, and the latter because the Tea Partiers are precisely those people—the lower-middle and working classes—whom they have always claimed to represent. They all hate and fear the Tea Partiers precisely because they signal a return to the conservatism of Colonel McCormick's *Chicago Tribune*, as opposed to Murdoch's *New York Post*.

Rothbard foresaw the upsurge of populism on the right, and his analysis of what it might accomplish underscores his uncanny prescience:

> The reality of the current system is that it constitutes an unholy alliance of "corporate liberal" Big Business and media elites, who, through big government, have privileged and caused to rise up a parasitic Underclass, who . . . are looting and oppressing the bulk of the middle and working classes in America. Therefore, the proper strategy of libertarians and paleos is a strategy of "right-wing populism," that is: to expose and denounce this unholy alliance, and to call for getting this preppie-underclass-liberal media alliance off the backs of the rest of us . . .

The establishment is running scared, crying, "The extremists are coming!" *And not a moment too soon.* ◆

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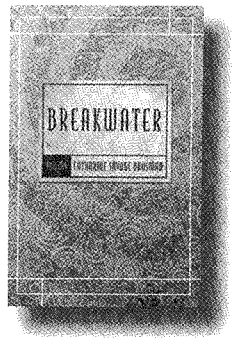

Brush the Distance

by John Freeman

Breakwater: Poems
by Catharine Savage Brosman
Macon, GA: Mercer University Press
111 pp., $30.00

CATHARINE SAVAGE BROSMAN'S latest book, *Breakwater*, is a stimulating addition to her always intriguing poetic realm. The book is packed with superlative individual poems, and their cumulative effect strikes this reviewer as majestic.

Breakwater is divided into three sections. Section I is an extended love poem involving the poet and the man to whom she was married some 40 years ago (and with whom she has serendipitously reunited). At the end of the book, she presents a "Postface," which gives the past and present histories of this relationship. I advise the reader to go to this section before starting on the poems. Though they certainly stand on their own without explanation, the Postface adds a depth of understanding to the poems that makes experiencing them even richer. For most poets, Section I would be dangerous to attempt; it would be easy to slip into maudlin platitudes. But Brosman's skill enables her to pull it off. The personal aspects of the poems—the romantic feelings and affirmations—are painstakingly developed out of impersonal, concrete physical settings (scenes from the American West) that, as the poet reflects upon them, become metaphors for the relationship. For instance, after five stanzas of descriptive passage about a landscape nearly destroyed by fire, she ends "In the Hayman Burn" by using this picture as a way of describing the wreckage left by the dissolution of her first marriage, but with a ray of hope that the relationship can grow back and be lasting this time:

> . . . I do not have another fifty
> years; I've got to take the forest as
> it is, half-
> ruined, wishing things redone,
> imagining green life,
> young trees, a chance to kindle a
> new fire in the heart—
> catching, glowing steadily,
> burning without loss.

Section II is primarily concerned with specific women in historical settings, a few well known, but most unknown to many beside the poet. Among various other themes, the majority of these poems follow the fortunes of these women in love relationships. With a few exceptions, these poems are narrative rather than lyrical (though Brosman's gift for musical language is displayed throughout) and are cast in free verse or blank verse. The following stanza from "Louise at the Piano" will give the reader a sample of the general flavor:

> . . . A bit of Czerny
>
> and of Bach, for warming up, and
> then it's Beethoven,
> the "Pathétique," the "Tempest."
> She remembers
> Fontainebleau that summer—
> thirty-nine—and Boulanger,
> Casadesus, the other students,
> riveted to music,
> while the war, collecting
> *leitmotivs* . . .

Section III is harder to pin down thematically. Containing elements of both preceding sections, it is the most broadly philosophical section, and the final poems return to the natural world of the West as a backdrop to, and metaphor for, love, though on a more transcendent plane.

SADLY, WE LIVE in an age in which those considered the leading thinkers among our artists and liberal-arts academicians are overwhelmingly antagonistic to the concept of "meaning" and intolerantly suspicious of any deeper search for "truth" than what is either shallowly faddish or obsequiously politically correct. Nevertheless, often in the face of irrational hostility, Brosman has steadfastly maintained that there is definite meaning both to our individual lives and to the universe as a whole. She ends "In Unaweep Canyon" by contending that, by nature, man is a constructor of meaning:

> . . . It's the beauty of conciliation,
> something eye
>
> and mind can do with shards and
> pieces of a life, a world—
> half-artisan, half-god, refining,
> shaping matter

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into meaning, gathering lines of
force that seemed
irreparably bent apart,
composing them into a sheaf
of purpose, modulating strange
desires by common chords.

The characters in her narrative poems often feel this sense of ultimate purpose, as the hero of "Burning in Louvain," trying to save a priceless manuscript from being burned by the Germans, relates:

. . . On the way toward Ghent, I
found
by Providence a small iron chest,
cast off
and empty in a field. The woods
nearby
were solitary: in the night I dug
a hole by scratching, dog-like, at
the soil
and hacking roots. It was an
offering
to past, and future, time. As if
my work

had been fulfilled that night . . .

Furthermore, Brosman asserts that we can discover in the Christian Faith the guiding principles behind all meaning and purpose. The doctrines that many other believers have expounded in prose she renders with poetic aptness in "Saint Séverin, I":

. . . we'll walk there now, recalling
Cana's wine

and benediction, gracious gifts
from One who made
life more abundant, whose long
torture—nailed
to a denatured tree, his body
writhing in great pain—
caused earth to quake, split
rocks, extinguished
day, and rent the veil of the old
covenant,
until an angel pointed to the bare
sarcophagus,
and light restored the world—
stone, wood, and bodies
reconciled and whole, all holding
heaven's word.

Yet, more than mere doctrine, her beliefs culminate in personal experience, as in "Christ Pantokrator," where she gazes on an altarpiece figure of Jesus in an Italian cathedral:

Anonymous, just strangers in a
crowd,
like those who stood on a Judean
hill
to watch, and heard Him as He
cried aloud,
we know the power of His
passion still:

the letters come alive, the voice
is clear,
as though, through two
millennia, we heard
the Christ Pantokrator among
us here
proclaim, in words, Himself, the
perfect Word.

Not only is her handling of subject matter deep, complex, and revealing, but Brosman is also a consummate master of technical skills. To the aficionado of traditional poetic craft (and Brosman is among the most traditional of contemporary poets), she offers a smorgasbord of delights.

Her poems continually erupt with innovative, often astonishing, metaphors that shed new light on events and processes. "In the Hayman Burn" describes the devastation of a forest ravaged by wildfire:

. . . aspen, pines, and fir, in green
armadas
on the waving hillsides, stripped
and charred,
their skeletons erect still, useless
masts, or fallen,
driftwood, in the wreckage . . .

In "Wilkerson Pass," she offers an entirely different picture—a living forest:

climbing, climbing through the
bends, reaching
the altitude of ponderosas and
the aspen groves,
girlish, gowned in white, heads
fluttering,

And there is the unearthly beauty of her panorama of the sky in the same poem: "with all this sky flying above me / on its cirrus wings that brush the distance . . . "

IT IS AXIOMATIC in traditional poetic craft that the sound of a poem's language should reinforce the sense of what that language says. Brosman creates some quite subtle and exquisite rhythmical effects in these poems. Take, for example, the comma pauses in the opening lines of "Breakwater," which isolate words and phrases, making them "islands" within the lines, and the "swirling" rhythm of the second line:

No man's an island, maybe, but
this hump of concrete,
breaching the swirling current
like a whale,
is one.

This passage is typical of her artistic control over rhythms in these poems.

Skillful alliteration and consonance create cadenced rhythms that stress the words involved. Brosman provides some scintillating examples in these passages from "Flying Straight":

when flickers of St. Elmo's fire ignite
the pools of darkness with their
cypress dance.

. . . that very man

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beside my bed—a buddy
    salvaged from
the night, and Nam, and from
    delirium.

The sound effects of a poem are often heightened by rhyme. The most effective rhymes are known as "organic." Organic rhyme occurs when the rhymed words exhibit a close semantic and/or rhetorical relationship, so that each modulates the sensitive reader's experience of the other in a manner often similar to metaphor. Of the 49 poems in *Breakwater*, 22 are rhymed. When Brosman chooses to employ rhyme, she often achieves spectacular effects, as in these lines from "Éventail":

a '30s child's kimono from Japan,
six coffee spoons of different
    designs;
and this, my favorite, a
    painted fan
of heavy pleated silk, with ivory
    spines—

And these from "Christ Pantokrator":

His steady eyes appear to turn
    their gaze
on every viewer—deep,
    unblinking, dark,
yet luminous and searching as
    the rays
that light the nave, the covenant's
    new ark.

And two from "Fire Ring":

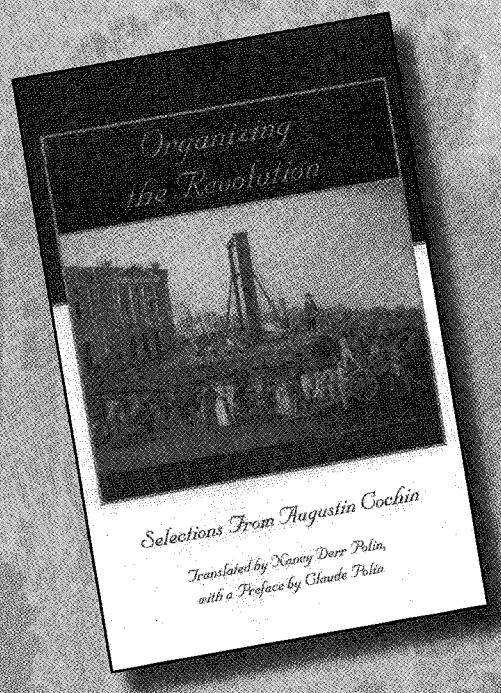
The conflagration in the west
    burned low,
as if confined along a slickrock
    ledge,
then leapt, inflaming cirrus in
    a show
of sanguinary feast at heaven's
    edge.

The stars broke through the
    darkness with a splash
and formed into their frothy
    patterns, pinned
by north; hot resin crackled, and
    a cache
of piñon embers quickened in
    the wind.

To those who desire to read good poetry and are weary of postmodernism, with its vapid and vacuous rubbish that passes for poetry, I strongly recommend Catharine Savage Brosman's *Breakwater*.

John Freeman's poetry has appeared in Chronicles.

FROM CHRONICLES PRESS


Organizing the Revolution
Selections From Augustin Cochin
Translated by Nancy Derr Polin,
with a Preface by Claude Polin

Organizing the Revolution

Selections From Augustin Cochin

translated by Nancy Derr Polin
Preface by Claude Polin

Augustin Cochin (1876-1916) undertook a minute analysis of the role that provincial clubs and societies played in the genesis of the French Revolution. His work shows clearly how the revolution was organized long before the events of 1789. This translation is an attempt to present his unfinished writings in a clear and coherent form.

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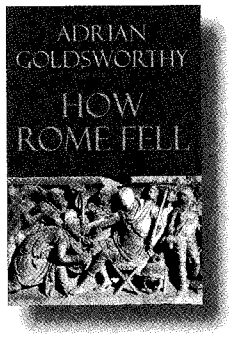

Dark Age to Dark Age

by Thomas Fleming

How Rome Fell
by Adrian Goldsworthy
New Haven: Yale University Press
560 pp., $32.50

THE DECLINE AND FALL of the Roman Empire began to haunt the West's imagination many centuries before Gibbon's masterpiece immortalized the phrase. Indeed, it is hard not to agree with Friedrich Heer's judgment that every European empire since Charlemagne's time—the Holy Roman Empire, Czarist Russia, Napoleonic France, Hitler's and Stalin's failed experiments—was a conscious attempt to recreate the empire that to this day symbolizes a Western unity that not only subsumes the national quarrels between France and England and Spain but even links Rome with Athens and Moscow.

By a well-known "irony" Gibbon published the first volume of his work in 1776, the year in which the Americans' declaration of independence supposedly signified the first real liberation from the heritage of ancient Rome. This notion—put forth by Noah Webster among other democratists—was utter nonsense. Most of the so-called founders were classically trained, and Jefferson went to his grave convinced that only ancient poetry was worth reading. Jefferson, Adams, and Madison, to name only three, thought a great deal about the lessons taught by democratic Athens and imperial Rome. It did not take even a century for Lincoln to imagine he was great Caesar's ghost, and it took only a bit more than two centuries for Latin-less neoconservatives to begin prating of the new *imperium*, without even understanding the meaning of the word, much less the thing.

Gibbon is still read by everyone with the slightest pretension to understanding history—both ancient and modern—and in the 20th century, J.B. Bury provided his text with notes correcting and amplifying the original, and Bury's edition has itself received further editorial amplification. Bury also wrote a readable *History of the Later Roman Empire*, and in 1964 A.H.M. Jones produced a comprehensive study, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602*, aimed more at professional than at common readers. One might have thought the need for such a book had been fulfilled and the market saturated, but useful scholarly studies of the past several decades have kept the subject alive, if only by the proliferation of controversies—both the old controversy over why Rome fell and newer controversies over the consequences. Some historians (*e.g.*, Walter Goffart) have argued famously, if not convincingly, that the period from roughly A.D. 450 to 700 was more of a gradual transition than a violent rupture, and some Catholic medievalists have written in a chipper fashion about the glories of the early Middle Ages, which they can thank their God they did not have to endure. Ask Martin of Tours about the Franks and Paul the Deacon about the Lombards, and their answers will make your flesh creep.

There has been so much recent and interesting work that I took up Adrian Goldsworthy's *The Fall of Rome* with pleasant anticipation, hoping to find that combination of narrative clarity and scholarly depth that is so often attributed to him in the popular press—though, having read some of his previous works, including his superficial hagiography of Julius Caesar, there was almost as much trepidation as pleasure in the anticipation. In the event, this new book proved to be neither as good as I hoped nor as bad as I feared, which makes it a useful addition to the library of anyone interested in ancient history.

GOLDSWORTHY'S SPECIALTY is military history, and, while I am not really competent to judge, his exposition of the changes in the Roman military system is lucid and helpful. For the rest, he provides a coherent and often brisk account of the later Roman Empire, though he has little to add to what interested readers already know, if they have read Gibbon and Jones.

In some respects, Goldsworthy is inferior to his predecessors. He seems to have little grasp of or even interest in the literature of late antiquity, and where he does bring up a text, such as the life of Saint Severinus, it is almost always one that has been thoroughly milked by predecessors—in this case, by Peter Heather. His failure to understand Augustine and Ambrose, Claudian and Symmachus, Libanius and Julian—to mention only six out of perhaps a hundred names—deprives his work of the richness and depth that can only be reached by a firsthand grappling with ancient minds.

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Literature is not the only gap in Goldsworthy's interest. He appears to know next to nothing of the religious and intellectual movement that took over the empire: Christianity. In the modern writer, Gibbon's hatred of the Faith has cooled down to a mildly contemptuous indifference, which in itself would not matter much, if he had taken the trouble to understand what Christians believed and why they argued over the nature of the Trinity or the limits of penitence. If Cyril of Alexandria were nothing more than a scheming troublemaker, his influence on his own and subsequent generations is hard to understand. Goldsworthy is no better, alas, on the pagans. In his brief description of Julian's attempted restoration of paganism, he fails even to hint at how Neoplatonism, one of the most splendid intellectual achievements of late antiquity, was corrupted and hijacked by theurgists (magical operators) envious of the Christian success. Far from being the personal faith that Goldsworthy describes, Julian's religion was only a stage in a development of magical Neoplatonism that stretches from Iamblichus to Plethon and beyond.

Though reviewers have praised Goldsworthy repeatedly for his effective narrative style, the praise is grossly exaggerated. *How Rome Fell* is puffed out with needless repetitions and pedestrian generalizations that contribute little to the entertainment or edification of the reader. The style itself is flaccid and sloppy, and the weary reader will find himself longing for Jones' pedantic clarity, to say nothing of the sensuous, almost Proustian beauty of Gibbon. Yale needs to hire a competent editor.

Picking up a book entitled *How Rome Fell*, I expected to read, in its 560 pages, a detailed account of the Roman West from the time of Theodosius to the effortless coup staged by Odovacer in 476. Instead, I found a rather hurried survey of late antiquity, sketched out from the point of view of the West. This meant not only that scant attention was paid to the careers of major figures like Stilicho, Aëtius, and Majorian, but that the Eastern Empire, where real power was exercised, almost disappears from view.

Why, then, did Rome fall? To his credit, Goldsworthy pays little attention to Gibbon's crank theory that Christianity is to blame. To other, more reasonable explanations, such as Germanic population growth or the overcentralization of the empire in response to crisis, he gives more credit, but the subject does not seem to interest him much. Racing over the two centuries from the death of Marcus Aurelius to the deposition of Romulus Augustulus, he gets to the end and says, in essence, *That's all, folks.* No empire lasts forever, not the Roman and not the American—a curious ending for a work that began with a disclaimer about such misleading historical parallels.

How Rome Fell is not at all a bad book by the standards of the 21st century, but the superficial analysis, slapdash composition, and shoddy editing reveal, unintentionally, how far into our own Dark Age we have already gone.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.

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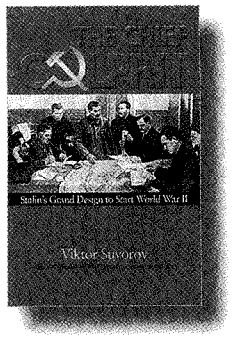

A Man of One Idea

by Andrei Navrozov

The Chief Culprit: Stalin's Grand Design to Start World War II
by Viktor Suvorov
Annapolis: Naval Institute Press
384 pp., $38.95

The Russian edition of Viktor Suvorov's *Icebreaker: Who Started the Second World War?* sports a blurb on the back, quoting a review of the English translation of the book published in a British newspaper on May 5, 1990. Suvorov, runs the quotation,

> is arguing with every book, every article, every film, every NATO directive, every Downing Street assumption, every Pentagon clerk, every academic, every Communist and anti-Communist, every neoconservative intellectual, every Soviet song, poem, novel and piece of music ever heard, written, made, sung, issued, produced, or born during the last 50 years. For this reason, *Icebreaker* is the most original work of history it has been my privilege to read.

The book had been published by Hamish Hamilton, in those days a highly respectable house. The newspaper reviewing it was the yet-magisterial *Times*, whose literary editor had given over to me almost the whole of the biweekly books page to do justice to a work, as I had told him, of outstanding importance. Using the term used by Coleridge of Kant in the *Biographia Literaria*, I said that Suvorov was "allbe-crushing." The book sold 800 copies.

Some months later, a German edition of the book, under the title *Der Eisbrecher: Hitler in Stalins Kaulkül*, was published in Germany by a smallish house, Klett-Cotta, to timid and gingerly reviews. It sold 8,000 copies. In 1992, Suvorov's manuscript was delivered to a maverick publisher in Moscow, and at last the book saw the light of day in the original Russian, quickly selling out its first print run of 100,000 copies. In the years that followed, over five million copies have been sold, making Suvorov the most-read military historian in history.

And yet, in the nearly 20 years that have elapsed between *Icebreaker*'s launch in England and the present publication of *The Chief Culprit*, no British, American, Canadian, or Australian publisher saw fit to exploit potentially global interest in the drifting *Icebreaker*—or to so much as touch Suvorov with a barge pole—despite the fact that the almost unobtainable $20 copies of the long-out-of-print Hamish Hamilton edition have been changing hands on the internet for upward of $500. "Revisionism," meanwhile, had become the war cry of the politically correct, so that historians like Ernst Topisch, expressing ideas that were but pale shadows of Suvorov's, were now flirting with ostracism, if not prosecution. Now the Naval Institute in Annapolis has put itself on the line.

Suvorov has written 18 books, including an autobiography and several novels, translated into some 20 languages, but as an historian he is a man of one idea. The idea is to overturn 20th-century historiography, a bastard discipline born of an unholy alliance between Stalin's Russia and the political elites of the democratic West. As the alliance was formed for the expedient of suppressing Hitler—whom Stalin had done his utmost to bring to power for political reasons, and the West its utmost to foster for commercial reasons—naturally, in the wake of World War II, a common interpretation of history came into being, a generic pabulum capable of masking inconvenient lacunae and of obfuscating embarrassing contradictions.

The result was that I, growing up in Moscow under Khrushchev and Brezhnev in the 1960's, was fed the same Allied pap as any of my contemporaries growing up in London, Berlin, New York, Tokyo, or Bombay. Between Soviet films about the war and the BBC "World at War" there were only differences of style, as today there are but differences of style between the Kremlin's official view of the past and, say, Antony Beevor's *Stalingrad*. Not surprisingly, some 30 books have been written since 1990, in Russia, Germany, Israel, and elsewhere, to refute Suvorov's thesis, while a popular Russian singer by the name of Rosenbaum has called on war veterans in the audience to "waste" him.

Suvorov was not frightened by Rosenbaum. He had been an officer in the GRU, Soviet army intelligence, until his defec-

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tion to Britain in 1978. To the death penalty for defection to which he was subsequently condemned by the court martial, another was added in due course by the KGB, for revealing state secrets. Neither of these has been repealed. Yet the "state secrets" that Suvorov has been revealing are joint Soviet-American secrets, with the laudable consequence that the good lie about the good war is now a good deal more transparent.

The Chief Culprit incorporates by reference, as a lawyer might say, the main argument of *Icebreaker*, putting it into the broader context of Soviet history. On Soviet history Suvorov is good, though it is not his forte, which is specifically the history of the war, the stuff of *Icebreaker*. But as neither the latter, nor its two sequels, *Day M* and *The Last Republic*, is available to the American reader, I assure him that *The Chief Culprit* is the only cogent analysis of World War II that exists in English today.

If any of us is free to write, publish, and read this today, it follows that in some not inconsequential part our gratitude for this must go to Hitler.

UNLIKE THE WAR HISTORIANS Churchill and Roosevelt, with skeletons of their own—whether of duplicity or, worse still, of innocence or ineptitude—deep in history's closet, Suvorov has no objective apart from exposing the bare bones of the matter. He possesses a photographic memory and is obsessed with weapons technology, qualifications that have enabled him, in the research of the *Icebreaker* trilogy, to read the war as an archaeologist reads the spearheads and arrowheads of a long-lost civilization, a palimpsest of military construction orders given and countermanded, an archive of dictators' intentions and illusions. Sometimes, at first glance, this seems hard going, but the reader's reward is never long in coming, as here, when Suvorov describes a single fortification in the Finnish War:

> The Finns used cement of the brand "600" in the construction of their fortifications. For every cubic meter of concrete, they used 95 kilograms of steel armature. Here are the results: Soviet 280-mm mortar guns and 203-mm howitzers fired directly on the Finnish strongpoint named "pillbox no. 0031." They used specially designed ammunition for firing on concrete. A 203-mm shell for the B-4 howitzer weighs 100 kg. The 280-mm shell for the B-5 mortar weighs 246 kg. There were 1,043 of the 203-mm shells and 116 of the 280-mm ones fired at the pillbox no. 0031. One hundred and thirty-two tons of shells for one pillbox!

I dare say this one paragraph reveals more about Stalin's war machine than all of Antony Beevor's books put together.

SUVOROV'S PRINCIPAL CONTENTION, familiar even to those who only know of his work secondhand, is that Stalin created the scarecrow Hitler in order to sic him on the great democracies of Europe, including Britain, and then to strike at the overextended Germany from the rear and to wrest these possessions from the villain. Is not liberation the very core of communist ideology? Hence the term "Icebreaker," used by Stalin as a code name for the other man with the mustache.

Unexpectedly for Stalin, and sensing that he had fallen into Stalin's trap, Hitler attacked Russia on June 22, 1941—without accurate intelligence, without adequate transport, without antifreeze, without warm clothing for his troops, and in possession of only 3,350 tanks of all types combined, compared with Stalin's 4,000 amphibious tanks out of a total of some 20,000. The element of surprise would enable Hitler to prolong his nation's agony for another four years, but in Suvorov's analysis Operation Barbarossa was the desperate act of a congenital suicide—or that of a war hero, which is what Hitler had been for his comrades-in-arms in World War I. Its indubitable achievement, however, lies in the fact that only in the wake of Barbarossa was the West able to regroup and in the end save at least half of Europe, including Britain, from Stalin's liberating clutches.

The other man with a mustache was the bloodiest of Stalin's exterminators, and one who proved the most difficult to exterminate. He was Stalin's tool of world domination and, when it unexpectedly crashed down on his head, his undoing. The awesome military potential Stalin had accumulated for an offensive strike at Germany in July or August 1941 was scattered like so many straws in the first days, weeks, and months of Barbarossa. Therefore, if any of us is free to write, publish, and read this today, it follows that in some not inconsequential part our gratitude for this must go to Hitler. And if somebody wants to arrest me for saying what I have just said, I make no secret of where I live.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European Editor.*

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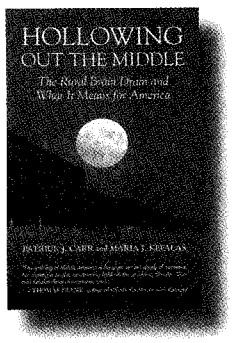

Love Is a Decision

by Nicole M. Kooistra

Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America
by Patrick J. Carr and Maria J. Kefalas
Boston: Beacon Press
256 pp., $26.95

Small-town America is dying, but not without help. According to Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas, it takes effort to leave your home, and small towns are doing a fantastic job of encouraging their best and brightest to do just that.

Hollowing Out the Middle is the result of a seven-year study by Carr and Kefalas (who are husband and wife). They sought to learn who stays in small towns, who leaves, who returns, and why; to accomplish this, they moved to a small town in Iowa. After gathering data from extensive interviews, the authors put the former students of the local high school into four categories: Achievers, Stayers, Seekers, and Returners.

The Achievers were the "class valedictorians and the first chairs from the orchestra, the track stars and student-government leaders." They were the good kids, the smart ones. From the beginning, Achievers were groomed to succeed—and to leave. Their mistakes were excused by the local police. Their teachers expected them to do well and called them out when they didn't. They knew that to get the kind of education and career that everyone always expected of them, they had to go elsewhere.

Stayers were everything that Achievers weren't. They didn't do well academically and tended not to participate in afterschool programs, but "[w]hen they skipped class, no one came looking for them, and when they didn't turn in their homework, their parents shrugged their shoulders and told them to find a job." Many of the Stayers did so, and their grades worsened. So they quit school altogether to work in the local nursing home or at Safeguard, the nearby ambulance manufacturer. They married young and had children. What the Stayers couldn't foresee were stagnant blue-collar wages and the outsourcing of their jobs.

The Seekers knew they wanted to leave; they just lacked any clear idea of how to go about it. Tempted by promises of travel and education, they enlisted in the Armed Forces, not realizing quite where they would travel or how useful their military education would be in the "real world."

Lastly, there are the Returners, whom Carr and Kefalas have subdivided into Boomerangs and High Flyers. The Boomerangs, mostly women, attended nearby community colleges or vocational schools, then married their waiting fiancés. The High Flyers have earned their degrees, had successful careers, and decided to move back for personal reasons—family or the desire to rear children in a small town.

The authors' central recommendation is that small towns must focus more on the Stayers and Boomerangs, instead of spending so much time and energy preparing the Achievers to leave and then trying to attract them back once they become High Flyers. Carr and Kefalas recommend investing in the community-college structure by increasing the number and quality of programs that will prepare Stayers for "the demands of the modern global economy, which places a premium on technical computer-based skills." The Midwest should be retooling for a postindustrial economy, preparing its young people for the types of jobs it is trying to attract.

Overall, *Hollowing Out the Middle* is an insightful look at how small towns are killing themselves. The authors' suggestions are, for the most part, useful, although their politically correct ideology is at times distracting. The most important observation in *Hollowing Out the Middle* deserves elaboration: "it is people's actions that ultimately determine whether a place hollows out." It will take more than city councils and incentive programs to bring back Middle America. It will take conscious decisions by everyone involved to sacrifice, something that this book fails to mention. Those born in small towns must decide to stay and do what they can for their homes, even when that means lower wages. Manufacturers must choose to resist when possible the pressure to globalize. Love of a place is a decision.

Nicole M. Kooistra is Chronicles' *assistant editor.*

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Journalism as Direct Mail

"POLITICS AND ABUSE have totally corrupted our tastes," Horace Walpole complained to a correspondent in 1771. "Nobody thinks of writing a line that is to last beyond the next fortnight."

Politics in Great Britain in the late 18th century was as agitated as that of America early in the 21st, although the divisions it reflected within British society were scarcely so fundamental and so deep as those that threaten the future of the United States in our own time. From the contemporary standpoint, it seems an exaggeration to claim that, in the age of Johnson, no author wrote but for notoriety and instant effect. Still, comparisons are relative, and Walpole's words might have been written to describe the state of political commentary today. Indeed, I seem to remember having had something to say on the subject myself. I cannot recall what it was that I said, but perhaps I can refresh my memory by trying to say it over again, in part.

CHESTERTON THOUGHT that journalists were the stupidest men in the world, but he was proud to call himself a "jolly journalist." Anyone who has looked up his articles for the *Illustrated London News* in 1906 and 1907 knows why. No work is jollier for a really accomplished musician than improvisation, and Chesterton, as a writer, was a master of the art. The delight he felt in choosing a theme and developing, embellishing, and departing from it in far-ranging flights of fancy and elaboration is palpable always, reminding us of the formalized glee underlying Bach's improvisations and variations in another art form. Mencken, in the same era and on the opposite side of the Atlantic, though a greatly inferior thinker and artist, conveys the same lusty joy in the trade in which he took pride, while roundly condemning his colleagues as ignorant swine. Partly, the two men's contempt for journalism and its practitioners was a humorous pose. More importantly, it was the implied expression of their determination to write journalistic articles and essays that made quiet claim to being literature, work that would last beyond the week or month of publication. In such work, both the journalist and his reader can find sophisticated relish and delight. Even in their own time, there were relatively few such writers, and readers. Nowadays, there are scarcely any of either.

I HAVE BEEN a magazine journalist for 38 years now, and I can assure anyone who wants to know that the business has grown steadily less and less jolly, and hence less interesting as well. Thirty years ago, I read or looked at a dozen journals a month. Today, I confine myself pretty much to the magazine you are holding in your hand, which allows me more time to devote to books, chiefly old books. Most newspapers and magazines of political opinion (to say nothing of websites) published today strike me as utterly trivial and boring. There are, I think, two reasons for this. The first is that the writers and editors responsible for them have no appreciation for words, for the sentences that words make, and for the ideas that sentences form. Lacking that appreciation, they cannot relish their own work, only the utilitarian message—a form of direct mail—their work sends to the intellectually undernourished reader. And that message is, almost invariably, either directly partisan or broadly ideological, more likely than not both. The terrible assumption has taken hold in our highly politicized age that politics has become so crucial to our existence that only politics matters, so that writing about politics has itself become a direct political act, like demonstrating or making a political donation. Modern writers, to the extent they strive for effect, do so by including what they conceive to be startling facts, cheap innuendos, and bold accusations in their journalism. The aim is to goad the reader into clicking on the next link, or signing a petition, or casting a vote, or sending someone money. Consequently, the large majority of what writers write does not last even a fortnight in cyberspace, or on the magazine rack. Chesterton never underestimated the importance of politics (he could not understand people who lacked interest in the issues of the day), but he believed in humanizing politics by incorporating it in literature and the general culture.

Computers and the internet are largely to blame for the new journalism, together with the modern educational system that produces ignorance and semiliteracy, but we should remember that the works even of the most distinguished journalists of the pre-cyberspace age, like Walter Lippmann, Arthur Krock, James Reston, and A.J. Liebling, while outliving the immediate fortnight, have not outlasted their time. But Chesterton, and even Mencken, are for the ages. ◆

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Iscariot

by William Baer

(John 13:27)

"Do it quickly." Then Judas slipped away,
and we assumed he had some other chore,
like buying food or wine for the holiday,
or maybe giving alms to the city's poor.
It was, after all, Judas who carried our purse
and counted the coins, and there was little doubt,
he'd kept a few, and things were getting worse.
It seemed to us his fire had fizzled out.
But what had crushed the faith of our one-time friend?
That Roman walls don't fall like Jericho?
That "eat my flesh" is hard to comprehend?
Who knows? Who knows how one can stoop so low?
What is a traitor? What kind of man is this?
Who betrays his friend-and-God with a wretched kiss?

Elijah

by William Baer

(4 Kings 19:12)

After forty days and forty nights,
Elijah, beneath the dark and ominous sky,
arrives at Sinai, ascending to the heights,
in total despair, and wishing he could die.
Then the wind comes—like an epitaph,
and its whirling gusts begin to ravage and swarm
and batter the world and break the rocks in half.
But God is not in the wind of the storm.
Then the earth quakes—and the world begins to sway,
and even the mountain seems to shatter and break.
Then the fire comes—and blazes the world away.
But God is not in the flames or in the quake.
But then, there is a whisper in the air,
the small still voice of love. And God is there.

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Aaron D. Wolf

The Art of Spanking

So, thanks again
for the love in the cradle
and all of the changes that kept
me dry.
And thanks again
for the love at our table
and tannin' my bottom when I
told you a lie . . .

IT'S A TEAR-JERKER of a song, and the only thing that rescues Ricky Skaggs' "Thanks Again" from excessive sentimentality is the fact that every word of it is true. But then again, it was a tear-jerker of a story that I was reading when that song started playing in my head.

The story appeared at *Salon.com*, and it was about parents spanking children, so right there from the get-go you're bracing yourself for another left-wing diatribe against what my parents, and their parents, and, well, a fair number of the parents I've ever known did and do. And let us remember, wise King Solomon told us, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son."

Kevin and Elizabeth Schatz were of a mind to take Proverbs 13:24 literally. Now I remember Dad's belt and Mom's wooden spoon, but neither would qualify as a "rod" in the literalist of senses. A length of quarter-inch plastic plumbing supply line comes closer. It was with such an instrument that the Schatzes (allegedly) beat their seven-year-old adopted daughter, Lydia, within an inch of her life, then proceeded to go another inch or two.

The beating apparently lasted for hours, and after the girl took her last breath, her lungs and heart just shut down, thanks to the amount of damage inflicted betimes.

The couple from Paradise, California, now faces a charge of murder, as well as more abuse charges pertaining to some of their surviving eight children, one of whom was hospitalized with massive bruising.

Another couple from "rural Tennessee" may face charges in connection to this case. It was Michael and Debi Pearl who suggested to the Schatzes that they buy the quarter-inch pipe and gave them a multitude of ideas about "Biblical chastisement." In fact, they've given nearly a million-and-a-half people those ideas, because that's the number of copies of *To Train Up a Child* that their representative claims to have sold.

When news accounts of this story first hit, the blogosphere lit up like a Christmas tree, and the *Salon* author graciously takes note of the fact that it was Christians who were first in line to condemn the ritual rod administration taught by the Pearls and practiced by the Schatzes.

One such condemnation was written by a "Laurie M," who describes them as the warmest, most thoughtful people you'd ever meet, but tells of how the Schatzes had suddenly left their conservative congregation over an untold doctrinal dispute. "The Pearl Method was the missing link," writes Laurie. "[I]t appears they were following Pearl teachings very carefully—in doctrine and in practice."

One of those teachings has to do with "living the sanctified life." It's the sort of language that rolls off the tongue with ease among King-James-only fundies who fear Pool Tables and medicinal wine from a teaspoon.

Certainly, Saint James wasn't joking when he said that "Pure religion" is "to keep oneself unspotted from the world." But what does that mean? For some it means following neat lists of dos and don'ts. Check off every item on your list, and, congratulations! You are "sanctified."

Thanks to religious publishing and the world-wide web, American Christianity now abounds in little lists of dos and don'ts, often with the scientific patina of self-help or psychology. "Parenting" itself is treated as a science, and the godly (or "well-adjusted") child as little more than the right side of an equation.

Skipping ahead, one might counter that books that spell out what it means to "dare to discipline" are necessary in today's disconnected world. And that what we need are more sound volumes like *X* or *Y* or *Z*, and less of the Pearls.

But what if "parenting" is less of a science and more of an art, something—like the fiddle—that you have to learn literally at the hands of someone else with experience and skill? Something that a thousand *you-didn't-know*-my-*father*'s can't change. What if the "pure religion" of which James wrote can only be found in a lifetime of struggle against sin within a flesh-and-blood community of families guided by a pastor? How did Israel know what Solomon meant by "the rod"? Why in the world didn't he, or James, or even Our Lord spell out neatly the seven steps to better finances, or marriages, or parenting?

For taking me fishin,' and flyin' my
kites,
And tuckin' me in, yes, night af-
ter night—
To my beautiful life-long friends,
Hey, Mom and Daddy, thanks
again. ♦

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Gloom, Despair, and Agony on Me

Deep, dark depression, excessive misery . . .

THAT, according to *Forbes.com*, is what I should be feeling, but as a native Michigander, I find it hard to be miserable, let alone depressed, on a cloudless day in February. Even mere half-Poles are naturally pessimistic, but a blazing sun in a bright blue sky greatly diminishes the need to take a pull on the bottle of Żubrówka.

Still, the reasons why *Forbes.com* says I should be miserable remain. On February 18, the website published its third annual ranking of America's Most Miserable Cities. The Forbes Misery Measure "takes into account unemployment, as well as eight other issues that cause people anguish":

> The metrics include taxes (both sales and income), commute times, violent crime and how its pro sports teams have fared over the past two years. We also factored in two indexes put together by Portland, Ore., researcher Bert Sperling that gauge weather and Superfund pollution sites. Lastly we considered corruption based on convictions of public officials in each area as tracked by the Public Integrity Section of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Anyone who has read this column over the past decade can see where this is going. Unemployment in Rockford is at levels not seen since the recession of the late 70's and early 80's, and our sales tax (8.25 percent on most things; 9.25 percent in restaurants) is ridiculous for a city our size. *The Rockford Files* evolved out of *Chronicles*' coverage of a Superfund district in southeast Rockford, and Tom Fleming can tell you just how miserable the weather is here (sunny February days notwithstanding).

On the other hand, all of our sports teams are minor league, but they don't do too badly; there's no commute time to speak of, unless your job is 70 miles away in Chicago; and no public officials have been convicted recently (though that does not mean there is no corruption). As for violent crime, Rockford's rates are high for a city this size, but still about average for the state of Illinois. And as everyone other than Ron Unz knows, in most cities of any size violent crime tends to be confined not only to certain neighborhoods but to certain segments of the population. I live and work and worship on the "high-crime" west side of Rockford, and I walk from home to office to church at all hours of the day and night without any fear for my safety.

TO READ, therefore, that Rockford is the 14th most miserable city in the United States came as a bit of a shock. My only consolation is that, unlike *Chronicles* contributing editor Tom Piatak, I don't live in Cleveland, the most miserable city. (Though having spent a long weekend there for Tom's wedding three years ago, I've largely overcome my Michigander aversion to the Mistake on the Lake, and my Polish side even looks forward to spending more time in Cleveland, the Polka Town.)

This is Rockford's first year on the list; *Forbes* increased the cities it examined from the 150 largest metropolitan statistical areas to the top 200, and Rockford got scooped up in the lower 50. So it's too early to tell whether we're headed up or headed down, but in the end, it hardly matters, if only because the lists that *Forbes* and *Money Magazine* and other publications put out are designed less to enlighten than to sell magazines.

If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all . . .

WHAT DOES MATTER is that Rockford sits where it does on this year's list not through bad luck, or even through the actions of local government, but largely because of the kinds of economic policies that *Forbes*, the aptly named "Capitalist Tool," has pushed in print and on the web, not to mention in editor-in-chief Steve Forbes' 1996 and 2000 runs for the Republican nomination for president.

Free trade, merger mania, globalization, outsourcing, offshoring, financial instruments more akin to roulette than to sound investment vehicles—*Forbes* has supported them all. While Rockford's manufacturing base eroded and local governments (city and county) raised taxes to deal with the effects of unemployment and crime, local businesses and even banks fell victim to the credit crunch after the nationwide housing bubble burst.

And then *Forbes* has the gall to rub salt in our wounds, all so it can generate a few days of headlines on websites and the business pages of newspapers. And now the sun has gone down, and the cold is creeping into my office, and that bottle of Żubrówka is looking mighty comforting.

Gloom, despair, and agony on me. ◆

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The Center Cannot Hold

by Christie Davies

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND is made up of three parts: evangelical Protestants, Anglo-Catholics, and liberals. They have long been at war, and soon this war will lead to the final rending of that Church. The Anglo-Catholics will break away when women are ordained bishops, as some already did when the Church of England first ordained women priests. From a pragmatic point of view, the ordination of women has proved to be a great success. Not only have they proved excellent in pastoral care, but their arrival has staved off the crisis caused by the fall in the numbers of men seeking to join the clergy.

In Ireland there is a real emergency, since so very few men now feel they have a vocation to join the Roman Catholic priesthood. This problem does not exist for the Church of England, since for both sexes, a prosperous spouse can supplement the meager earnings of the "clergyperson." There are even husband-and-wife priests who share responsibility for a parish or a cluster of small parishes.

Nonetheless, many are disillusioned. Ex-canon Dr. Edward Norman, one of the Anglicans' most distinguished intellectuals and a former supporter of women's ordination who has since gone over to Rome, said in 2004,

> I'm against it—on the evidence. We were told that a whole dimension to humanity was missing from the ministry, but that enrichment hasn't happened . . . women emphasise caring, relationships, suffering, healing and love. Men are interested in truth, ideas, conflict, sin, wickedness and virtue. Those are caricatures, but there was wisdom in Our Lord entrusting the office of the priesthood to men.

Many left for Rome when women were first ordained, including married Anglican clergy who, despite their wives, were eligible for reemployment in the Catholic Church, as well as many prominent laymen, notably John Selwyn Gummer, a leading Conservative politician and previously the staunchest of Anglicans, one firm in his belief that the Church of England was a fully Catholic descendant of England's pre-Reformation Church. Far more will leave when women become bishops. Even the evangelicals will feel uneasy, for this is for them contrary to the unerring teachings of Saint Paul, who declared that no woman should exercise authority in a church. At present if an objector to female authority lives in an Anglican parish where the priest is a woman, he or she can simply choose to attend a different church where a man presides. However, it is clear that the new women bishops will, if not immediately, eventually come to have unfettered authority within their dioceses, and this will cause a crisis for entire congregations and their priests. The evangelicals have nowhere to go, but the Anglo-Catholics will decide that there's no place like Rome.

UNTIL NOW the Anglo-Catholics have been sustained by their belief that Anglican orders are valid and Catholic because Anglican bishops are part of a valid apostolic succession. The original Anglican bishops at the time when Henry VIII made himself head of the Church had been consecrated as or by Roman Catholic bishops, and more recent Anglican bishops have in addition been "co-consecrated" by Old Catholic bishops who broke with the Holy See in the mid-19th century but who maintained apostolic succession. It is a precarious position, and many Anglo-Catholics have gone over to Rome because they had come to doubt its validity. In particular, there was a controversy in the 19th century over the installation of the first Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Rabbi Michael Solomon Alexander. No one doubted the sincerity of the rabbi's conversion, which had been inspired by his study of the book of Isaiah. The problem was that he was also to become a bishop of the Evangelical Christian Church of Prussia. This joint venture with another Church that had specifically rejected apostolic succession was one of the factors that led the pioneering Anglo-Catholic John Henry Newman to convert to Catholicism, later becoming cardinal and recognized today as a Venerable Servant of God. Newman's coming beatification will coincide with the final disillusionment of the Anglo-Catholics in regard to the validity of the Anglican Church's claim to apostolic succession. They will all follow Newman's example, and for essentially the same reason.

The liberals who dominate the ruling committees of the Anglican Church have caused the split by reason of their secular zeal for the full equality of the sexes, a priority that far exceeds their commitment to tradition and continuity. They hate the very idea of *semper eadem*. The liberals are also seeking to force another split over whether open and sexually active homosexuals should be allowed to become bishops. The election of the Rev. Mary Douglas Glasspool, an open lesbian, as the Episcopalian bishop of Los Angeles is as much a luxurious delight to the

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liberals as it is wormwood and gall to the evangelicals. The Anglo-Catholic clergy are rather more concerned by the fact that she is a woman. A substantial proportion of the voluntarily celibate Anglo-Catholic clergy is homosexual, which is why they don't mind homosexual bishops (there have been many), provided they are discreet about it. However, for the closeted homosexual Anglo-Catholic priests, women priests are not only theologically unacceptable but are seen as a serious threat to the only masculine identity they have. There are many strands to their rejection of women.

The crisis came when Jeffrey Hywel John, a Welsh Anglo-Catholic clergyman of undoubted intellectual gifts, was nominated to be the next bishop of Reading in 2003. Dr. John had been a practicing homosexual, and he declined to express proper repentance for his past. The evangelicals were outraged, and there was a very disagreeable public controversy that only ended when Dr. John's fellow Welshman, the Most Rev. Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, persuaded him to withdraw. Within months Tony Blair had made Dr. John dean of St. Albans, and in 2006 Dr. John contracted a civil partnership with the Rev. Grant Holmes, with whom he had lived for many years. (No doubt Dr. Spooner would have called Jeffrey John "our dear old queen.") Deans have administrative, not episcopal, responsibilities and are appointed directly by the prime minister, acting for the Queen, who is the head of the Church of England in England. Left-wing prime ministers have often abused their power in this respect, as when a Labour prime minister appointed Dr. Hewlett Johnson, a groveling Soviet apologist, to be dean of Canterbury, where he was known as the "Red Dean." In fairness, whereas Johnson was a fool, a liar, and a traitor, Dr. John is a much-respected dean and will probably in time become a bishop, not of course in England but in his native Wales, which has no established church and where he is held in great esteem.

The "Church in Wales," as it is termed, will then join the Episcopal Church in the United States as part of the homosexual-affirming faction in the Anglican Communion, the faction that has aroused the ire of the evangelical Anglican bishops in Africa, whose scriptural conservatism is reinforced by a hatred of sodomites inherited from tribal custom. (Uganda is about to make sexual relations between two men or between two women a crime liable to capital punishment.) Bishop John Spong of New Jersey, an American liberal, said of the Africans who opposed gay rights that "they've moved out of animism into a very superstitious kind of Christianity . . . If they feel patronised that's too bad. I'm not going to cease to be a 20th century person for fear of offending someone in the Third World." His views were widely interpreted as meaning that African Christians are "just one step up from witchcraft." This caused outrage among other Anglican liberals who could not and cannot bring themselves to make the mildest criticisms of any African; to do so would be "racist." The high-liberal Mark Santer, then bishop of Birmingham, tried to get the Africans off the hook by saying that their "homophobia" was merely a repudiation of the well-remembered pedophilic practices of Anglican missionaries in Africa (many of whom had been celibate Anglo-Catholics). It was a truly wonderful row with liberals howling abuse at liberals across the swamp.

Later Catherine Roskam, suffragan bishop of New York, suggested that some male Anglican prelates beat their wives, particularly priests from countries "where it is culturally accepted to beat your wife." The Africans were furious; the liberals, paralysed. The archbishop of York, John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu (originally from Uganda), declared, "I have never beaten my wife though I can't talk about other people," and said that the American bishop "should not throw out Aunt Sallies which become divisive." It was another sad reminder that the Anglican Communion is an uneasy international aggregate of independent churches, from the ultraliberal Episcopal Church in America, which has already split, to the churches of Africa and Asia, which hold fast to what the missionaries taught their ancestors.

In the wings is Prince Charles, heir to the throne and to the headship of the Church of England, who wants to amend his coronation oath so that he will no longer swear to be *Fidei Defensor* (Defender of the Faith), a title conferred on the young Henry VIII by the papacy in 1521. He wishes instead to vow to be "defender of faith," and Britain's Muslims are ecstatic at the thought that this nincompoop will be defender of their faith, too. It is a multicultural gesture that may even include atheists with their absurdly fierce faith that there is no God. If and when (increasingly if) Charles becomes king, he will not take the title *Dei gratia*, by the grace of God, enjoyed by the present Queen, but instead "by the grace of God and Allah and thousands of Hindu deities, too."

As ex-canon Norman has put it, "Anglicanism is going to tip into the sea . . . There is a big hole at the centre of Anglicanism—its authority. I don't think it's a Church; it's more of a religious society." The Church that is not a Church. This is the way the Church ends. This is the way the Church ends. This is the way the Church ends . . .

Christie Davies is the author of
The Strange Death of Moral Britain
(Transaction 2006).

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When We Were Kings

by John O'Neill

You ain't a pimp
and you ain't a hustler.
A pimp's got a Caddy
and a lady got a Chrysler.
—"Young American," by David Bowie

EACH YEAR, on the third Saturday of August, people line the sidewalks along Woodward Avenue in Detroit for the annual Dream Cruise. In the ambiance of the affluent northern suburbs of Oakland County, the spectators take in the sights of vintage muscle cars and other restored models from the 50's through the 70's driving up and down Detroit's main drag.

In some ways, the spectators are every bit the participants, taking as much pride in nostalgia as the drivers do in ownership. They watch the flashy display of headers and fins much the way Soviet officials used to watch the parade of military hardware through Red Square on May Day.

These days, Detroit's dominance of the global car market, like Soviet dominance of global politics, is a thing of the past. And in the older faces of spectators at the Dream Cruise, the sense of loss is as obvious as the sense of pride.

Lest one doubt the Detroit area is realistic about its long-lost clout, look no further than the million-plus crowd that assembles one day each year for the Dream Cruise compared with the smaller crowd that turns out over the span of a full week in January for the annual Detroit Auto Show. Each year, Detroit-area newspapers attribute the declining crowds to inclement weather, but Michigan has always been a cold place in January, even when, many years ago, the Detroit Auto Show was a huge draw.

On the other hand, if Detroiters are realistic about the decline (and potential extinction) of the Big Three automakers, the Dream Cruise doesn't really evoke in the younger spectators a feeling for what it was like when Detroit was on top.

Growing up in and around Detroit in the 60's and early 70's, if your father worked on an assembly line, he didn't work for General Motors. He worked for Cadillac or Buick or Chevrolet (or the since-scrapped Oldsmobile or soon-to-be-scrapped Pontiac). And you wouldn't call a neighbor's Mercury a Ford or his Dodge a Chrysler.

Falcon was a Ford. New Yorker was a Chrysler. Mercury and Dodge were divisions. And General Motors, with Chevrolet leading the way, was all divisions. Strange how the Big Three divisions are what gave unity to Detroit.

My father was self-employed, yet as much a Ford guy as if he had worked for the company (and, in many ways, he did). Were you to have asked me back then to name the biggest car company in the world, my response would have been Chevrolet (which, though a single division of General Motors, was bigger than both Ford and Chrysler).

General Motors is no longer the world's largest car company, not even with all its remaining divisions combined. That designation now belongs to Toyota. And if General Motors should someday regain its number-one spot (and that's a big if), it will not recover its dominance.

But back to the Dream Cruise. So what if it doesn't teach the kids about what Detroit was like? So what if it's more a form of escapism than a history lesson? Henry Ford himself once said that history is bunk.

Perhaps one might call the Dream Cruise a humanities lesson. Hot cars blaring out the West Coast sounds of the Beach Boys. Great music inspired by our cars—"GTO," "Little Deuce Coup," and "Fun, Fun, Fun" among them. Will anyone ever write a song about a Lexus?

Unfortunately, in real life, Daddy has taken the T-Bird away. And the decline of the Big Three has inspired more somber music since the days of the Beach Boys. Bob Seger rejoiced in the 80's how "back in '55 we were makin' Thunderbirds." But in the same song, he was lamenting that we no longer make them; today, "you're lucky if you work." And the city Bruce Springsteen was mourning in "My Hometown" sure sounded like Detroit.

See the Corvette? The Mustang? Hot cars. Still, be careful not to miss out on the Edsel or the more recent Ford Country Squire Station Wagon. That's the Dream Cruise in its full effect (at least for Detroiters in my age group). You're in the back seat of that station wagon again, and Dad grumbles at the car ahead, "C'mon, Chrysler. Move it." At the same red light today, you only hope the vehicle ahead is an American car—any American car.

Or maybe you don't care. Lots of that going around, even in Detroit. Barack Obama promised what's left of the auto- and steelworkers unions that he was going to put the nix on imports. But the Mercedes in front of you at that light is sporting an Obama bumper sticker. Who cares? Not Jimmy's Quality Meats, a Detroit-area business that uses imported vehicles. Or the Checker Cab guy who drives a Honda.

Are European and Asian vehicles really better cars? Their customer-satisfaction ratings are certainly higher. But if customer satisfaction is based on quality, how does one explain the success of Detroit Tigers

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and Red Wings owner Mike Ilitch? His Little Caesars Pizza empire makes the worst stuff ever to have come out of an oven. And if that's not bad enough, Detroit's annual Motor City Bowl, played every year over the Christmas holidays, has been renamed the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl.

It's all too much to contemplate at the Dream Cruise, which is supposed to be fun. It will be a cold day in August before Detroit recaptures its dominance of the auto industry. On a warm day in August every year, however, it's enough to enjoy the display of what Detroit once built and in which it still takes pride.

And while the rest of the world sees a well-preserved car, we in Detroit still see ourselves in the backseat and hear Dad grumbling, "C'mon, Chrysler. Move it."

John O'Neill writes from Detroit.

John O'Neill

John O'Neill

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Philip Jenkins

Well, Naturally, We're Gullible

I LOVE SARAH PALIN. That's not necessarily because of anything she believes or advocates, but because of the pleasure I derive from watching the apoplexy she causes in liberals, especially in a university setting. Not only is Palin a strong conservative, but she has a regular middle-class background and a passionate religious commitment. This combination calls forth an unabashed blend of class contempt and anti-Christian bigotry.

Witnessing such reactions in recent months makes me ask just why such opinions are so near monolithic in the context of a university campus. Of course, college faculty are overwhelmingly liberal, at least in the humanities and social sciences. Everyone knows that. Apart from a college town, are there many other settings where one person at a social gathering will make a fervent call for higher taxes across the board, and everyone else will approve heartily?

But just why is that liberalism so self-evident? Faculty liberals themselves have no trouble explaining the matter, although normally they would be chary about stating their opinion too openly. In their view, their academic qualifications prove that they are smarter and more educated than other people, so of course they understand the world better. They think critically and without prejudice. Intelligent people favor intelligent policies, which are liberal.

Recent months have produced a number of subtler explanations about the political coloring of universities, and some demand respect. One study, for instance, reported in the *New York Times*, challenged the idea that the fact of education made people liberal. Rather, people who are already liberal are naturally attracted to becoming college professors, because of the common social stereotype that the profession is full of gutsy liberals. The reasoning is, of course, circular.

This past February, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published a sweeping contribution from Jere Surber, a professor of philosophy, under the title "Well, Naturally We're Liberal." Basically, Surber restated the familiar Smart People theory, but with a new historical twist. Educated people know more history, which they understand as a constant struggle of the oppressed and disenfranchised against power and privilege. In the words of the Prophet Barack, history really does have a right side, and educated people know they must be on it. And that right side is the Left Side.

Surber, in other words, genuinely has not realized that historians have ideological views, and that left-liberal historians write books that reflect their perspectives. They also award prizes and distinctions to other books that reflect those views, and tend to hire people who come from a similar political standpoint. When they evaluate the American past, they award praise or blame according to their own individual criteria, so that the most interventionist and statist presidents win the highest accolades. Of course the history that Surber is reading promotes a liberal agenda, because it was intended to.

Whether such a study leads the reader to favor the right side of history is a totally different question. Compared with other sections of society, college faculty are still far more likely to believe that communism was a noble experiment; that the Soviet Union never had spies in North America; that the Cold War was a capitalist provocation; and that state socialism is a highly desirable goal. If educated people are so smart, why are their conclusions so systematically wrong?

I offer two working explanations for pervasive campus liberalism. One is the yawning gulf that separates many university faculty from any form of productive economic activity. Universities depend wholly on the larger state of the economy, but that relationship impinges not at all on the ordinary professor. In their minds, the university clearly has money, and it has an obligation to share it. Most professors do not know how or where that money is generated, any more than a South Sea islander who builds an airstrip in the jungle in the expectation that the gods will send him rich cargo.

Also, university life is designed to promote infantilism and dependency. A typical student receives a bachelor's degree at 22, but then might spend anything from 10 to 15 years as a graduate student and teaching assistant until receiving the doctorate that is the license to join the profession. Not until 40 might that person begin his first regular job. By that point, you have learned to blend completely into the political culture of your mentors. In the ugly but common academic phrase, you have been "well trained." You thus have a natural sympathy for intervention from on high and have learned to eschew initiative. You have become a liberal.

But whatever the reason, the liberalism of college faculty seems unlikely to change any time soon. I do look forward to the day of Sarah Palin's presidential inauguration, when I will be volunteering to ladle out the Kool-Aid. ◆

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The Eclipse of the Normal

Nearly a century ago, G.K. Chesterton wrote of "the modern and morbid habit of always sacrificing the normal to the abnormal." Today the very word *normal* is almost taboo. Perish the thought that there is anything abnormal—let alone sinful, vicious, perverted, abominable, sick, unhealthy, or just plain wrong—about sodomy. (Unsanitary? Let's not go there.)

As one T-shirt legend puts it, "I'm proud of my gay son." Sure you are, lady. I'll bet when he told you, you blurted, "O darling, you make me so proud!" I mean, like, who wouldn't? And then you went out and bragged to all the neighbors.

And do you enjoy picturing what he and his "partners" do together? If you're curious, you can probably get the idea from a DVD. Just go into an "adult" DVD store and ask where the anal-sex section is. This should make you just burst with maternal pride.

Let me lay my cards on the table. I'm what they call homophobic, and I believe God loves me just the way I am. He may even regard homophobia as one of my finer qualities. To a much lesser degree, I'm also lesbophobic. I realize that lesbianism is also a form of sodomy, but that strikes me as a rather technical point, because, in my rather limited experience, it doesn't involve the sort of repulsive practices male sodomy does. How often have you heard of a lesbian dying of AIDS?

This is hardly the place to discuss sexual practices in clinical detail. Such discussions are freely available, indeed unavoidable, elsewhere. To add to them here would be, as the old saying has it, carrying coals to Newcastle.

But I digress. (I wondered when you'd notice.) Most people realize that God made two sexes. Even the phrase *gay and lesbian* is an attempt to ape the natural symmetry of nature's (two and only two) sexes. Male and female homosexuality are only superficially parallel; in fact, they are wholly different and dissimilar maladjustments. The male brand is madly promiscuous and indiscriminate; the female brand tends to be monogamous. This will surely be borne out by the upshot of the craze for same-sex "marriage"—an absurd contradiction in terms if ever there was one. (You might as well expect two bulls, or two lions, to form a lasting union.)

We are witnessing what might be called the eclipse of the normal—an eccentric phase of modern history in which huge numbers of people feign ignorance of what is perfectly obvious. The polite taboos on calling abortion "killing" and sodomy "perversion" are mere symptoms of this; Barack Obama, with his sycophantic solicitude for "gays," is typical of the modern liberal mind-set. "Who is to say what is 'normal'?" is now thought to be an insoluble conundrum.

Well, who is to say that, in all the fantastic abundance of nature, there are only two sexes? Or is that another tough one? After all, members of some species of marine life can even change sexes. It's clear that anybody who can't answer such questions just doesn't want them to be answered. All sane people know the answers, and it's a waste of time arguing with a man who pretends not to know, even if he's the president of the United States. This nonsense has been going on far too long.

Who could have imagined, a generation ago, that organized Sodom would achieve such cultural and political power in the United States? And so soon, at that! "We are all sodomites now," exults Andrew Sullivan, and he has a point, at least a semantic one. The word *sodomy*, as he notes, used to comprise all sexual perversions, including contraception within marriage. The real sexual revolution came to pass quietly, when contraception became generally accepted as a legitimate part of marriage. After that, it became hard to argue against virtually any sexual practice, inside or outside wedlock, short of rape. The revolution in morals occurred almost before anyone noticed it. And today it is taken for granted.

Few of us can now remember how sternly nearly all Christians disapproved of birth control before 1931, when the Anglican Church opened the floodgates with a few seemingly innocuous exceptions in certain cases of hardship. By now the old standards of chastity have melted away like ice in August. In today's terms, they are well-nigh incomprehensible.

Modern man is thoroughly cut off from his past. He and his ancestors would be total strangers to each other. The essential problem is a new form of hypocrisy in which we all feel pressure to affect ignorance of things everyone used to know—and which most people still do know.

To put it bluntly, our moral standards would horrify our forebears. They would gasp in disbelief at the things we now accept as normal, for the simple reason that any civilized society would recognize those things as highly abnormal. ◆

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Igor Stravinsky

by Christopher Sandford

VIRGINIA WOOLF once wrote that human nature suddenly changed in the year 1910. Certainly, the accepted idea of what popular entertainment could look and sound like underwent a rude shock on June 25 of that year, when the ballet *The Firebird,* by 28-year-old Igor Stravinsky, received its premiere at the Paris Opera. From the small and brooding chromatic notes that open the piece, through the martial flourishes and swooping glissando harmonics (among a host of other constantly changing patterns that distinguish its "Infernal Dance"), to its climactic melee, this was music that both acknowledged the past and signaled, quite often frantically, to the future. It could be said that Stravinsky's *Firebird* score was like experiencing Debussy heard down the wrong end of the megaphone—swelling, late-Romantic textures refined into Russian folk music, with strategically placed bursts of noise to subvert the mood and disconcert the audience.

The ballet has historic significance not only as an artistic *tour de force* but as the beginning of a collaboration between Stravinsky and the impresario Sergei Diaghilev that would also produce *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Of the last named, little remains to be said except that its intensely rhythmic score and primitive scenario, in which Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography forsook classical fluidity for that of the pagan fertility rite, brought about the most famous of theatrical riots at the premiere, triggered, apparently, by a disturbing opening solo played on a bassoon at the very top of its register. Those six reedily evocative notes, rising up like the waking cry of a forest animal, were revolution superbly controlled. Stravinsky later commented of the occasion,

> I left the auditorium at the first bars of the prelude, which had at once evoked derisive laughter. I was disgusted. These demonstrations, at first isolated, soon became general, provoking counter-demonstrations and very quickly developing into a terrific uproar. During the whole performance I was at Nijinsky's side in the wings. He was standing on a chair, screaming "Sixteen, seventeen, eighteen"—they had their own method of counting to keep time. Naturally the poor dancers could hear nothing by reason of the row in the auditorium and the sound of their own dance-steps. I had to hold Nijinsky by his clothes, for he was furious and ready to dash on to the stage at any moment and create a scandal.

As it was, there were reports of fistfights both among the audience and between the audience and the police, and one well-dressed patron is said to have climbed a safety-rope and thence swung, ape-like, from the rigging. In later years Diaghilev insisted that he had repeatedly shouted to the electricians to turn the house lights on and off, hoping this would put a stop to the fracas. The accounts are as various and confused as the scenes they claim to describe, and the only certainty is that following the premiere Stravinsky took to bed in a rest home for six weeks, and that on his reappearance he found himself to be the most notorious young composer in the world.

If Stravinsky's stated intention was "to send them all to hell," then he may have judged much of the critical reaction to *The Rite of Spring* a success. His fellow composer Camille Saint-Saëns was one of those to leave the first performance prematurely (allegedly infuriated at what he considered the "misuse" of the bassoon in the opening motif) and later put himself at the head of a group that would include British musicologist Constant Lambert and German social philosopher Theodor Adorno, all of them broadly united around the thesis that Stravinsky was a kind of "performing flea," in Lambert's phrase—someone not to be trusted to produce "formally satisfying structures" when he could engage in "stylistic acrobatics" instead. It seems only reasonable to agree with Lambert that "the flea" wasn't one of those artists who make a virtue of consistency, once having learned their trade to practice it with little variation to the very end. Stravinsky was one of the self-transformers.

Over a professional career of some 60 years Stravinsky collaborated with everyone from Picasso to Walt Disney; cheerfully accepted commissions to conduct, perform, and teach in every classical format; wrote eight well-received books of musical theory and reminiscences, holding forth on topics from his Russian Orthodox Faith to the correct way to mix a martini; briefly became a drinking partner of Dylan Thomas; and in general exuded an urbane personality that nonetheless established that he was no martyr to false modesty. Stravinsky had views on very nearly everyone and everything, and conversed on level terms with popes and heads of state. In 1962, he accepted an invitation to visit the Soviet Union for the first time since the revolution and, while in Moscow, was treated to a two-hour harangue by Nikita Khrushchev, who used every oratorical skill at his disposal in an attempt to persuade Stravinsky to return to the Soviet Union permanently. The 80-year-old composer listened impassively to Khrushchev's pitch—and turned him down.

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Stravinsky was born on June 17, 1882, in the St. Petersburg suburb of Oranienbaum and would often recall his earliest memory of sound, when as an infant he encountered a mute peasant in the woods, who sat on a stump entertaining himself by vigorously clicking his tongue and pressing the palm of his hand under his armpit in a crudely rhythmic duet. Certain of Stravinsky's critics would complain that he never entirely lost this fascination for found music, which in later years incorporated a variety of metallic clangs and piston hissings hitherto confined to the factory floor. (Too little, perhaps, has been made of Stravinsky's youthful passion for train travel, with its relentless soundtrack of rattlings and whistlings, and the cumulative effect this would seem to have had on a richly impressionable mind.)

As a teenager he studied under Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the Russian composer known for his bold use of primary instrumental colors, who became like a second father to him. In June 1908, Stravinsky completed a short orchestral fantasy he called "Feu d'Artifice" ("Fireworks") and posted the score to his tutor at the health resort where he was spending the summer. A few days later, the registered package was returned to him, marked, "Not delivered on account of death of addressee." This setback notwithstanding, "Feu d'Artifice" was performed in St. Petersburg, where it was heard by Diaghilev.

In time Stravinsky became a sort of prototypical, musically trained version of Mick Jagger in restlessly commuting between London, Paris, the French Riviera, and ultimately Los Angeles and New York, while making the acquaintance of a large number of young women along the way. He settled in the United States in 1940, at the age of 58, and had an early confrontation with the American authorities when, following a performance of patriotic music on April 15 of that year, he was arrested by the Boston police for violating a federal law that prohibited the reharmonization of the national anthem. (Those were the days!) Despite this unpromising start, Stravinsky was able to sit out World War II in a comfortably furnished exile in Hollywood, where he was at the center of a circle of expatriate artists that included George Balanchine, Aldous Huxley, Thomas Mann, W.H. Auden, and Dylan Thomas. After acquiring a fluent if perhaps florid command of English in his middle age, Stravinsky was to prove a well-informed and prolific monologist on a wide array of cultural and social issues. Thomas, notoriously able to hold his own in that field, admitted that he failed miserably when once or twice he attempted to shout Stravinsky down. "A typical evening with him was like a double concerto, in which presently one was fiddled and trumpeted off stage," the poet remarked. "It was exhilarating and faintly demoralizing in equal measure." Stravinsky's friend and amanuensis Robert Craft recalled being embarrassed by the composer's habit of tapping a glass with a fork and loudly demanding attention in restaurants.

BETWEEN THE FULL-SCALE symphonies, operas, ballets, chamber pieces, jazz ensembles, piano rags, and elegies (the list isn't exhaustive), Stravinsky became by his mid-40's a jack of all trades who was, happily, a master of some. Much the same voracious creativity would inform his extracurricular activities. His taste in literature was wide and led to an impressively eclectic range of professional associations over the years: His last completed commission, undertaken at the age of 84, was to set Edward Lear's "The Owl and the Pussycat" to piano. Stravinsky had more than a passing knowledge of classical authors and the Latin liturgy, and on eight occasions composed works intended specifically for an ecclesiastical audience. He continued to be a rigorously practicing member of the Russian Orthodox church throughout his life, and there was a period in his adolescence when some of his friends thought that might ultimately be his career. There is no question of Stravinsky's religious sincerity, then or subsequently, but it seems fair to say that religion dovetailed with his always quite robust secular ambitions. "Music praises God," Stravinsky noted. "Music is well or better able to praise Him than the building of a church and all its decoration"—a claim from which he in no way excluded his own contribution.

Stravinsky was to allow himself a certain moral latitude within the context of his spiritual convictions. He married first his cousin Katerina Nossenko, with whom he remained from 1906 until her death from cancer in 1939. His character and resolve were sorely tested when he met and fell in love with another woman, Vera de Bosset, during the years of his wife's decline. Vera eventually followed him to the United States, where they were married in March 1940. Stravinsky was by all accounts a devoted husband, but both of his marriages fell somewhat short of the traditional monogamous ideal. He is said to have enjoyed a number of affairs with high-profile partners such as Coco Chanel, who made the mistake of speaking about him to the press; in the 1950's, an acrimonious split with an American actress who is still alive today brought more unwelcome attention. It appears Stravinsky was that familiar celebrity contradiction, an intensely private exhibitionist. He took vocal exception to the "hyena newspaper writers" and "jackal photographers" who besieged him on occasion, and added that, when people told him "That's the price of fame," he felt physically sick at their stupidity.

Not surprisingly for a composer whose royalties were impounded by the Bolshevik government, Stravinsky was no friend of the pristine ideological left, nor of any political party that seemed to him to trespass on his absolute freedom of action. He did not vote. He was not a moral crusader. He once expressed misgivings about that potent symbol of the 1960's British land-

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scape, the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, when that body threatened to pull the plug on a performance of *The Firebird* at London's Royal Festival Hall in a dispute over staffing. "What's this Goddamned nonsense all about?" Stravinsky enquired of the concert's promoter, who said later that he "recognized that question as a signal for trouble starting."

The composer became a naturalized American citizen in 1946 and often spoke effusively of the essential resilience and optimism of his adopted country, at least until the onset of what he saw as the "decadent lunacy" of the 1960's. In 1952, Stravinsky participated in a European musical festival that, it later transpired, had been staged by a dummy organization fronting for the CIA. He remained sanguine when apprised of his patron's true identity. A distinguished and, perhaps by extension, faultlessly left-wing French arts critic went to Los Angeles later in the 1950's "to confront [Stravinsky] about his associations, and instead found myself supping his champagne, and being entertained by a stream of unstoppable and hilarious monologues." Around two the next afternoon, the visitor woke up with what he calls an "ideological hangover," having been "completely seduced by the man's extraordinary personal charm."

Stravinsky spent his last years in New York City's Essex House hotel, where he occupied three unostentatious, lower-floor rooms furnished with a variety of Russian icons, religious figurines, and samovars (with a Chinese checkerboard somewhat incongruously on permanent display next to the piano), which seemed to rest on a foundation of books and papers. The Swiss writer C.F. Ramuz once looked at Stravinsky's work table and marveled,

> He is, above all, a calligrapher . . . His writing desk resembled a surgeon's instrument case. Bottles of different colored inks in their ordered hierarchy each had a separate part to play in the ordering of his art. Near at hand were india-rubbers of various kinds and shapes, and all sorts of glittering steel implements: rulers, erasers, and a roulette instrument for drawing staves, invented by the master himself. The overall effect was of a combined stationery and hardware store.

He retained an engaging curiosity about the debased popular music of the day and occasionally gave lessons to a young piano student named Warren Zevon, who became a rock star of sorts later in the 1970's. The octogenarian Stravinsky could also be tricky and contrary, and pilgrims to the Essex House tended to remember the composer's rumbling, heavily accented speech, and what Zevon called the "snorting, equine nose" that confronted one almost as expressively and urgently as the voice. He was, as Zevon added, "a little dangerous." Stravinsky was at his mordant best when speaking to the *New York Review of Books* just a week before his death:

> The effectiveness of lithium in constraining our manic friends during their cliff-hanging phases has already been demonstrated . . . and probably more of our other friends than we suspect are kept going by amphetamines. And in spite of all the failures in my own case, I prefer to attribute my depression to a so-called sodium leak into the cells, rather than, say, to "the state of the arts" or the "philosophical overview."

Urged by the newspaper to say something about music, Stravinsky replied, "I seldom [do] any more, since my own muse went out on a wildcat strike," before launching into a wonderfully free-associating complaint about the various nocturnal sirens, alarms, and other "militant noise hazards" contriving to disturb his sleep.

Stravinsky died in New York on April 6, 1971, at the age of 88. His body was flown to Venice for a public funeral Mass, which included a performance of the *Requiem Canticles* he had composed for the occasion. Robert Craft described the closing Postlude as "the chord of Death, followed by silence, the tolling of bells, and again silence, all thrice repeated, then the three final chords of Death alone." In an editorial decision that would be hard to imagine today, the producers of the *CBS Evening News* chose to give the funeral four minutes of coverage in a half-hour broadcast. Stravinsky's coffin was borne to the cemetery island of San Michele, where it was buried close to that of the composer's long-time collaborator Diaghilev.

Christopher Sandford is a Seattle-based journalist and author.

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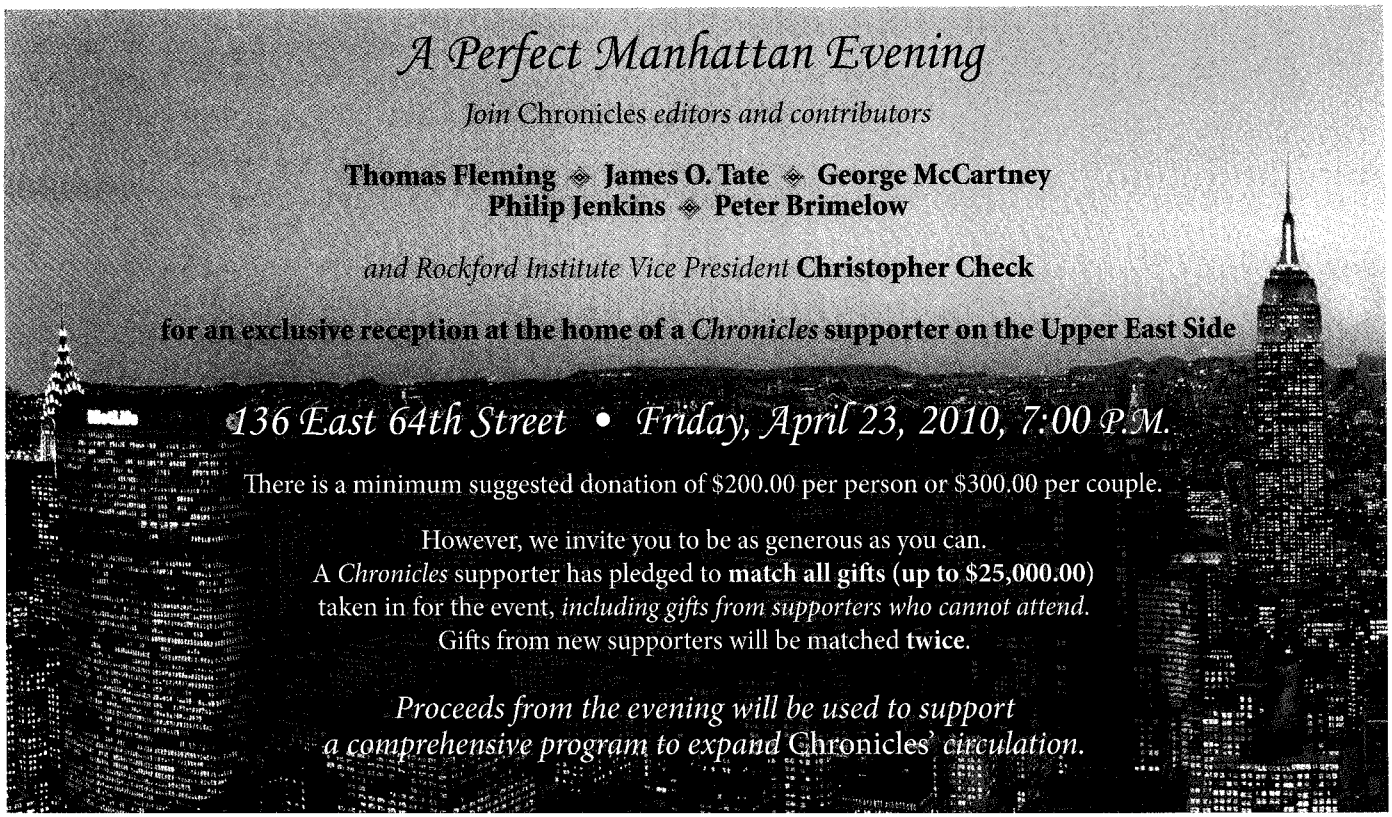
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It's the Jobs

by John Willson

WHICH PRESIDENTS of the United States have done a job of work? This little survey is limited to those born in the 20th century. Before that, everybody worked.

Let's start with our present leader. He has never lifted a shovel or driven a truck or had to make a payroll. He has never grown a tomato or convicted a criminal. He has never coached a team or bagged groceries. He has never cleaned a toilet for minimum wage, never hammered a nail for a serious purpose, never made a cold call on a customer trying to sell encyclopedias, never climbed a ladder to paint the third story of a house. He has never sat in a cubicle and processed forms or had to worry about his next evaluation. He's never done anything but politics. His wife has more work credentials.

Moving backward in time, the same description applies to Presidents Clinton, Johnson, and Kennedy. LBJ did teach school for a time while waiting to get a political appointment. Outside of that, none of them did anything but politics. JFK used his family money to buy offices, while LBJ and Clinton used their offices to buy money, but otherwise their careers were remarkably similar: unreflective progressivism mixed with hedonism and reckless use of power.

Presidents Nixon, Carter, and Reagan worked—and worked hard. Despite the puerile attempts at jokes by the chattering classes about B-movies and inherited peanut farms and failed lemon groves, each of these men knew what it was like to work long days with the fate of their family dependent on their efforts. (A note on Nixon here: Anyone who has grown up in a marginal family business knows how physically and emotionally exhausting it is to scrape along day after day for 12 or 14 hours and regularly get taken back three steps for every two you take ahead. What later critics called his political paranoia may have been the reflection of a realistic understanding of how conditional our lives are. My friend M. Stanton Evans said not long ago that he didn't like Nixon until Watergate; I never really liked Nixon. I am of a generation that had him as a constant political presence from our earliest public memories—the Hiss trials—until literally the day of his funeral. After reading his memoirs, I did, however, come to appreciate that Nixon, whatever his flaws, was superior to his enemies.) Family stores and farms and acting are honorable jobs of work, and they teach what all work teaches: There are things that can and can't be done. President Carter's so-called malaise speech may turn out to be one of the most prescient and prophetic political speeches of the last century.

The Presidents Bush fall somewhere in the middle. Born to the purple, both have been willing to work for productive and public reasons. Unlike the nonworkers, they seem to be honorable family men and Christians, and at least George Walker knows how to run a chainsaw and sit a horse, which I'm sure President Obama could do (being young and athletic), but I wouldn't want to be the one to teach him. Their terms in office befuddled their party and the country in general. You can't have a New World Order abroad and an Old World Order at home.

WHAT'S THE POINT of this superficial and rather crude exercise? Republics are supposed to draw from honest and hard-working citizens to govern on the basis of practical experience. All governments are to one extent or another oligarchies, but republics, when they have been successful, have avoided permanent bureaucracies and wealth-driven political classes. That venal, ambitious politicos like Lyndon Johnson could rise to the top in our particular republic has always been a real possibility (think Aaron Burr), but that what P.J. O'Rourke once called "sewer trout" ("Oh, how those sewer trout swim upstream!") like the Kennedys would become enthroned was not so predictable. Once that happened, however, the chances of us ever again getting good men with gravitas to run for office were severely diminished. We are reduced to a political class of rulers.

Such rulers do not value work; they value power. Robert Taft once said, "You can't outdeal" the New Deal, and that is the most profound political insight of the last 75 years. When work is replaced by deals the political system of a republic no longer has any meaning beyond electing and appointing dealmakers. Under the circumstances, the best that we can do is a Carter or a Reagan, and that ain't quite good enough.

My mother-in-law said to me many years ago, "What would we do, if we didn't have work to do?" How can dealmakers think clearly about creating jobs or reforming healthcare or restructuring education when they have never been on an assembly line or cleaned a bedpan or listened to a heartbroken girl who has just failed an exam? Work, for the most part, is growing stuff, making stuff, and fixing stuff. Our dealmakers know only how to pass stuff around, and they call it an "economy."

Ted Kennedy, the (perhaps exaggerated) story goes, was shaking hands early one morning at a factory shift-change when he was first running for the U.S. Senate. A grizzled old worker, grasping his soft hand, said to him, "You ain't worked a day in your life."

"I know," Kennedy replied, "isn't it great?"

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And then he spoke for the "working classes" for half a century.

The jobs that people like to do—growing, making, fixing—are so far beyond the understanding of our present political class (and the vast majority of our chattering classes) that it seems all right to export them or eliminate them and still insist that we have an economy. John McCain, in the incident that convinced me that he should never, ever govern, once offered $50 per hour to anyone who would agree to pick lettuce for an entire growing season. He was certain that illegal Mexicans were the only people in the world who would pick lettuce at any price. When about 6,000 men and women applied for the job in 24 hours, he dropped the subject.

The dealmakers are of course interested in expanding the dependent classes as much as possible. That's another story, but, in the meantime, when President Obama starts talking about "creating jobs," grab your wallet and run the other way as fast as you can.

John Willson is professor emeritus of history at Hillsdale College.

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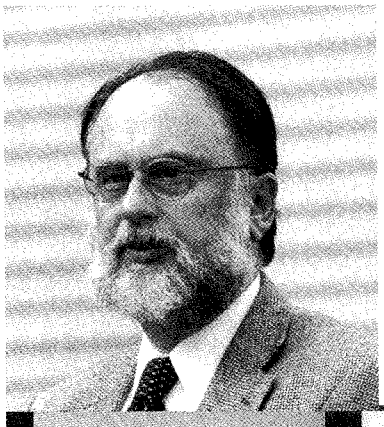

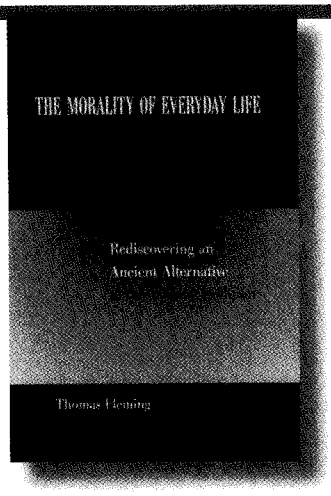

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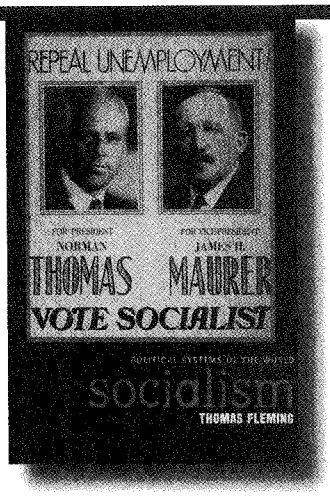

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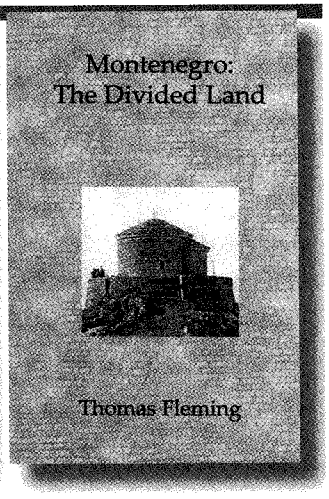

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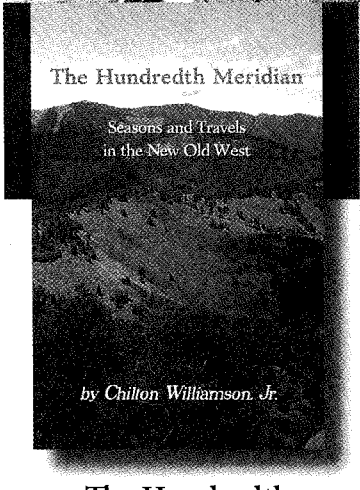

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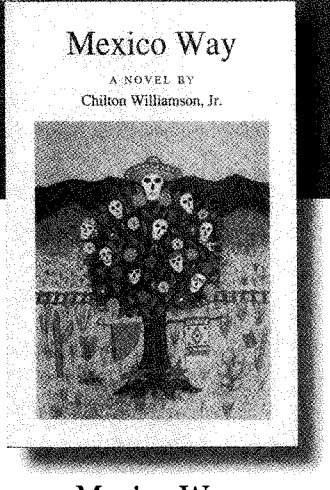

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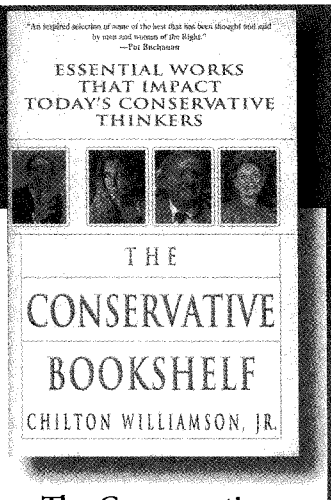

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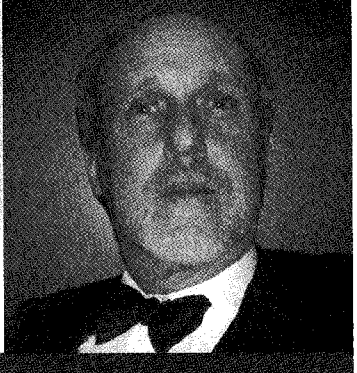

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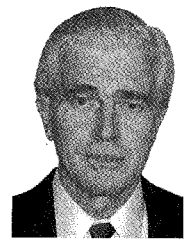

The Edge of Darkness
Produced by GK Films, Icon Productions, and BBC Films ♦ Directed by Martin Campbell ♦ Screenplay by William Monahan and Andrew Bovell from the original television script by Troy Kennedy Martin ♦ Distributed by Warner Brothers Pictures

A Mortal Blivet

IN *THE EDGE OF DARKNESS*, director Martin Campbell has tried to compress the six hour-long episodes of the television drama he made for the BBC in 1985 into a two-hour film. The result is a blivet: ten pounds of baloney in a five-pound casing. No, baloney's not the word. A genuine blivet is stuffed with what baloney fragrantly becomes after it enters the mouth and takes its winding passage through the alimentary canal. I have used the wrong word not merely to be decorous but because of baloney's connotation—a thoughtless conglomeration of doubtful meat products devoid of any nutritional sustenance. This comes much nearer to expressing the essential silliness of Campbell's film. Campbell is, after all, the director of two James Bond films, well-made works to be sure, but high on the baloney index.

In both versions, *The Edge of Darkness* combines a febrile conspiracy thriller with a blood-soaked revenge drama. The narrative concerns the dark, tangled doings of government officials, nuclear-industry honchos, and environmental terrorists blasting—literally—into the life of a simple, honest man, a seasoned detective named, oddly enough, Craven, who knows next to nothing about the threat they pose to the body politic. Now this is a promising premise. I haven't seen the television production, but, having read about it, I don't think I'm wrong to suppose that the original writer, Troy Kennedy Martin, wanted to demonstrate how political machinations on the world stage impinge on private lives.

The series was far more politically ambitious, not to mention ridiculous, than the film. Martin's script made a blatant appeal to the audience to join with the supporters of the Gaia movement and take up arms to defend the living organism known as Earth against the dread, dead hands of the corporate state—specifically Margaret Thatcher's England. It was time to save the planet from the depredations that inevitably follow in the train of human interference with nature. It's to be regretted that the producers of both the television and film versions nixed Martin's original conclusion. By the agency of some stolen plutonium, Craven was to be transformed into a tree, a sort of ultimate green protest against the vile human world. Few things would have pleased me more than Mel Gibson (Craven) sheathed in bark.

IN ITS BLIVET FORM, the story manages to retain some of the environmental urgency of the original series, but this aspect has been forced into the dim background, from which it springs forth furtively and confusingly now and again. In the foreground, the focus is on Craven, a Boston homicide detective whose life is shattered when his daughter, Emma, comes for a visit. No sooner is she through the door than havoc reigns. Since it has been shown endlessly in television advertisements, I suppose I can take the liberty of discussing the opening event that plunges Craven into despair and then transforms him into a vengeful angel of death. Before Emma has had a chance to unpack her bags, she becomes violently ill, and Craven decides to take her to the hospital. As they open the front door of his home, a masked gunman shoots the girl twice with a shotgun, and she dies in Craven's arms.

When his police colleagues arrive at the scene to investigate, they all assume the gunman was a criminal Craven had inconvenienced in the past. This seems logical but proves wrong, a conclusion Craven reaches when he finds a gun and a Geiger counter among Emma's effects. Using his detective skills, he begins to piece together the truth. Emma had worked as a research analyst at a nuclear facility with the suitably ominous name Northmoor. Having become suspicious that Northmoor's CEO was doing more than storing nuclear waste, she became involved with an environmentalist group seeking to expose the company for what it is: a criminal enterprise making nukes for . . . well, we never quite learn, although there is a fleeting mention of constructing jihadist dirty bombs. Whether to supply or implicate Al Qaeda goes glaringly, perhaps mischievously, unanswered. I suspect this is one of several instances in which the blivet effect trumps narrative clarity. Anyway, Emma discovered nasty things were afoot, and one thing led to another.

IT'S LONG BEEN the donnée of Hollywood films that corporations are evil, and nuclear corporations unspeakably so, especially because they're operated in

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conjunction with the government, which is always suspect, even when a Clinton or an Obama is in the White House. I used to mock this assumption, thinking it the kind of boneheaded reasoning to which the dangerously innocent are given. After witnessing the Bush administration lie to the country baldly and, what's more, get away with it, I have become considerably more disposed to distrust officials in both the public and the private sectors. A government that can cynically lead its populace into a wholly unnecessary war with the help of defense contractors should not be trusted. Add to this how our major investment banks have been casually betraying the public, and you have the conditions that warrant an all-encompassing skepticism as the only stand one can reasonably take. Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that *Darkness* is a serious investigation of the military-industrial-Wall-Street complex. I want to suggest merely that the premise Campbell's film has invoked as a plot point can no longer be dismissed as blivet filler, though it certainly smells as ripe.

All in all, *Darkness* may be a conventional melodrama, but it is worth seeing for its acting. As Craven, Gibson is as stolid and relentless as we could wish. Some commentators have complained that he doesn't give us his usual wild-eyed *Lethal Weapon* performance. Well, maybe that's because he's playing an aggrieved father. He is completely believable, right down to his *r*-less Boston Irish accent. Yes, the plot works overtime to manipulate our emotions so that, when Craven inevitably dishes out some well-earned violence, we will be cheering him on without a moment's compunction. This sentimental trickery would be irritating except that it comes in scenes which are among Gibson's best: the ones in which he recalls his now-dead daughter as a very much alive child. Gibson's acting hoists these moments clear of the bathos another actor would succumb to. His naturalness with Gabrielle Popa, the four-year-old actress playing Emma as a child, won me over completely.

Fathers the world over will connect with one scene in particular. Emma comes upon Craven shaving. Seeing her fascination with this manly ritual, he takes some of his shaving cream from his face and dabs it on hers. Then he hands her a comb so she can "shave" away the foam from her cheeks, and they both laugh at the results. This simple moment says all we need to know about his devotion to his girl. And, of course, it justifies in advance whatever excess he will use in pursuing her killers. As the 25-year-old Emma, the beautiful Serbian actress Bojana Novakovic brings a pleasing sweetness to her role. She makes us understand that her affection for her father has matured and now includes an ironic, teasing dimension to accommodate what the young inevitably see as the limitations of their elders. At the same time, she's no less devoted to him than she was at four.

Danny Huston plays Northmoor's CEO as if he had been dipped in a vat of olive oil; he's that smooth. When Craven comes calling on him, he barely looks at the detective before turning his back on him while answering his questions. He explains that his daughter's position at Northmoor had been a lowly one, speaking with a calculated blandness as he surveys the world through the floor-to-ceiling windows of his grand office atop his high-tech redoubt. He is to all appearances an unassailable man. We, of course, know better.

Perhaps the best reason to see this movie is Ray Winstone, a British actor who specializes in tough-guy roles and who joins Gibson in saving *Darkness* from its own sentimentality. Despite his working-class British accent, he has taken on the role of a fixer named Jedburgh who works for an assortment of high-level administrators in various American intelligence agencies. He's the fellow you call on when there's a bit of mopping up to do. Say a spy goes double, or there is a botched operation with undue collateral damage or maybe a risky freelancer still on his feet after the bodies have stopped bouncing—Jedburgh's your man. And yet Jedburgh would clearly like to get through his assignments with a minimum of carnage. He is most especially tired of taking out the innocent and near innocent in order to clean up for the many twits in high places sucking on the government's hind teat. His dead-eyed gaze bespeaks a man who has seen quite enough of treachery and violence. All things considered, he's at an age when he'd rather ponder the metaphysical.

We find this out while he's having a physical exam. As his doctor looks into his ears and eyes, Jedburgh can't resist asking, "Do you see a soul in there?" The sawbones replies that the issue is not in his province. This prompts Jedburgh to sum up matters soulful without professional assistance. "We live a while," he growls with cold bemusement, "and then we die sooner than we planned." Now, I ask you, could a soulless man come up with such a succinct statement of what it means to be human and all too aware of the inexorable approach of the end?

There are other indications of spirituality in this aged side of beef. While it seems evident Jedburgh has been sent by his masters to remove Craven from the picture permanently, he recognizes a soulmate in the Irish cop and holds back. For his part, Craven sees both the danger Jedburgh poses and his unspoken kinship. He asks the Brit what it takes to do his line of work. To explain, the usually taciturn Jedburgh invokes with unsuspected literary finesse F. Scott Fitzgerald's index of competence in tight corners: "the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." And function he does to a very satisfying, if predictable, denouement. ◆

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Taki Theodoracopulos

Tears of a Clown

WATCHING THE FINALS of the Australian Open was a revelation. The worthy loser, Andy Murray, praised the winner, Roger Federer, by saying that he, Murray, could cry like Roger, but as yet could not play as well. He then broke down and wept in front of thousands. The crowd loved it and cheered Andy to the rafters. Every print and electronic journalist covering the final repeated Murray's words as if they were the Sermon on the Mount. The dour Scot was suddenly transformed into a tender, caring, sympathetic person, instead of a tough guy whose hitherto impregnable armor had carried him within a whisker of tennis immortality by winning a grand slam.

Murray's tears were nothing new for the Australian public and the millions watching on the idiot box. Just one year ago to the day, the very same Roger Federer had wept unashamedly during the ceremony while addressing the winner, Rafael Nadal. I had watched that final, too, and was surprised to see the most successful tennis player ever cry like a baby in front of thousands of his fans. *What is going on here?* I said to myself. Have tennis players turned into Hollywood types? Is this genuine emotion, or is it shameless spin? Have their agents instructed them to cry in order to raise the price of their endorsements?

THE ANSWER to this is simple. Tennis players are following the cult of sentimentality as men in all walks of life—politics, the arts, even crime—are doing. Tough guys may not dance nowadays, but they sure know how to cry, at least in public. Playing the sympathy card is the equivalent of what long ago was known as the stiff upper lip, with today's difference being the theatrical prop of the wobbling lower lip. And so it goes, sport fans. You lose, you cry, and it snatches moral victory from the hard-won triumph of the winner. Actually, it is a shameless new low in spin, first established by the great draft dodger himself, William Jefferson Clinton, a man who could well up at the sight of a pregnant prostitute on her way to court.

The birthplace of the stiff upper lip was Sparta, which was also my mother's birthplace, although the latter fact is neither here nor there. "With your shield or on it," was the order a Spartan mother issued to her departing warrior son. In other words, come back a winner, or be brought back dead. Then again, I remember my mother wailing when my father went off to war, a very un-Spartan behavior, but what the hell—she had become Americanized, I suppose, although this was back in 1940. Now everybody cries, and tears have become the commodity that does not lose its value, no matter what. One of the greatest presidents of recent years, Richard Nixon, kept a straight face and a stiff upper lip when he was forced to relinquish the presidency after a congressional *coup d'etat*, as did his Veep, Spiro Agnew.

COMPARE THAT with the present British prime minister, Gordon Brown. He recently wept on TV when talking about the death of his infant daughter—she died ten days old, never having left the hospital—but this came after hours of negotiations with the BBC on how to overcome the widespread perception that he is dour and remote. It does make one wonder. No parent can fail to sympathize with Brown losing a child, but how many would talk about it in a political interview in front of millions? But Brown is a politician desperately seeking public approval and about to go to a national election, so even the death of a child is fair game.

I suppose it is only by emoting in public that so many people today believe you have any heart at all. The rot really took off after the death of Princess Di, when an ugly mood threatened the British monarchy because of the perception that they were cold and heartless from their absence of public displays of grief. It was only after the Queen showed some signs of sorrow that the danger was diffused. This had its roots in the therapy culture, which tells us that it's bad to repress emotion. "Let it all hang out" was a 60's curse, and it has now become a way of life. Everyone cries, starting with soldiers, an unheard-of phenomenon. This has the pernicious effect not only of devaluing real feelings such as grief but of elevating histrionics such as self-pity and narcissism. Hence our society's obsession with "self-esteem."

Emotional incontinence has turned men into wimps. The new man has to be caring and unafraid to burst into tears. But I've got news for you. It's all a sham. Good men were and are caring without having to show it. Stoicism and emotional restraint are superior to cheap histrionics. Touchy-feely types are like Clinton, a dime a dozen, and as dishonest as they come. ◆

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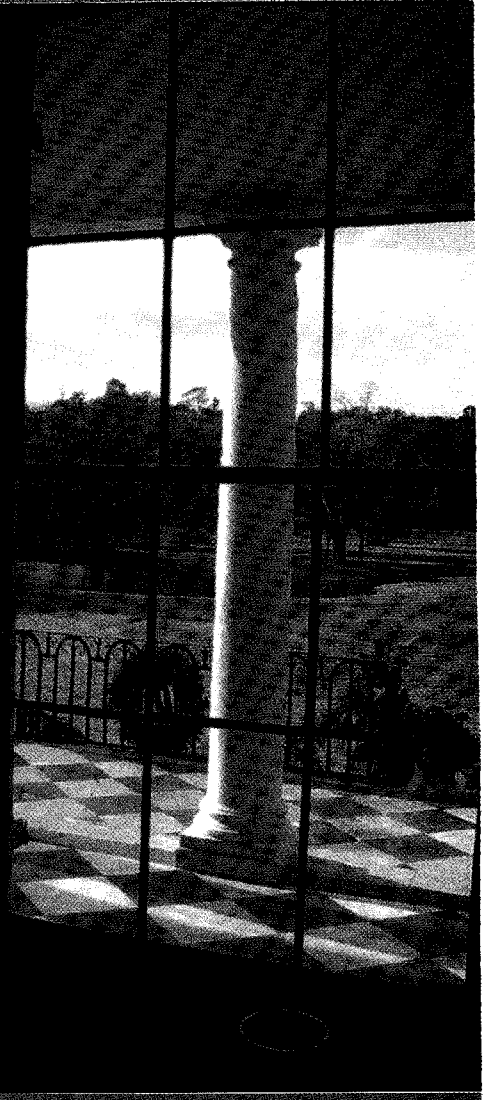

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For more details, watch future issues of *Chronicles*
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